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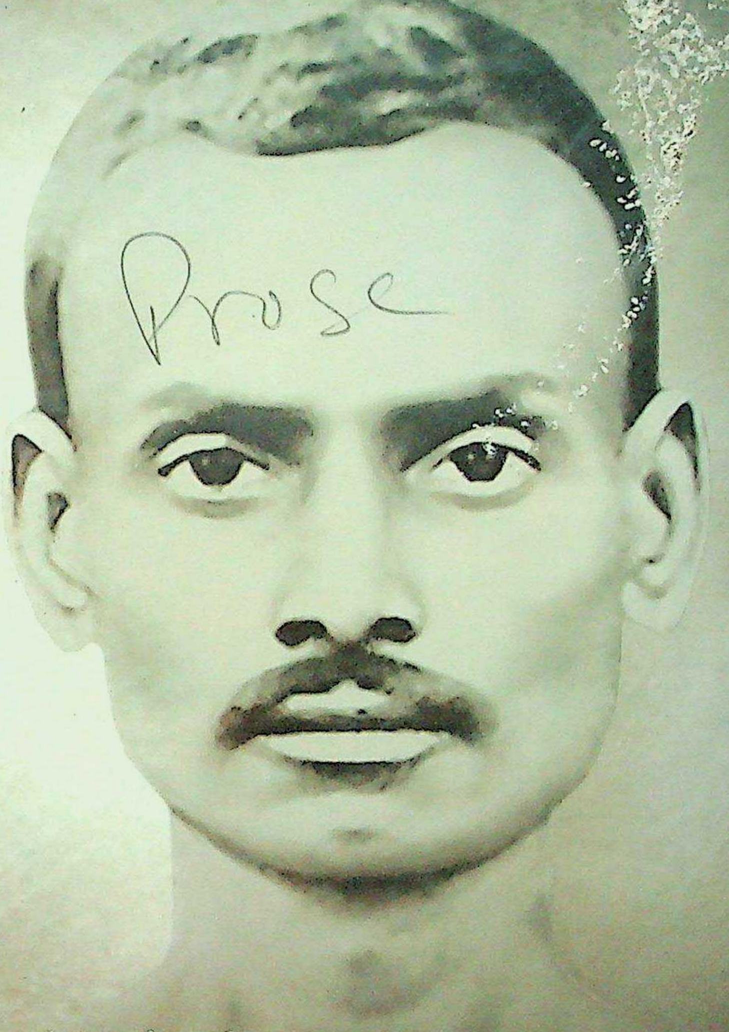

Shrimad Rajchandra

SAGA OF SPIRITUALITY

PUJYA GURUDEVSHRI RAKESHBHAI

College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Pujya Gurudevshri Rakeshbhai

Propounding the path of Bhagwan Mahavira, the torchbearer of Shrimad Rajchandraji's mission, Pujya Gurudevshri Rakeshbhai is a spiritual visionary and a modern-day mystic. He is illuminating thousands of lives in various countries through enlightening discourses and an array of meditation retreats. His divine benevolence has uplifted a multitude of underprivileged lives through inner augmentation and societal development.

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SHRIMAD RAJCHANDRA

SAGA OF SPIRITUALITY

Pujya Gurudevshri Rakeshbhai

अग्निशेखर और क्षमा कौल
द्वारा यह
पुस्तक सप्रेम भेंट

Shrimad Rajchandra Mission
Dharampur

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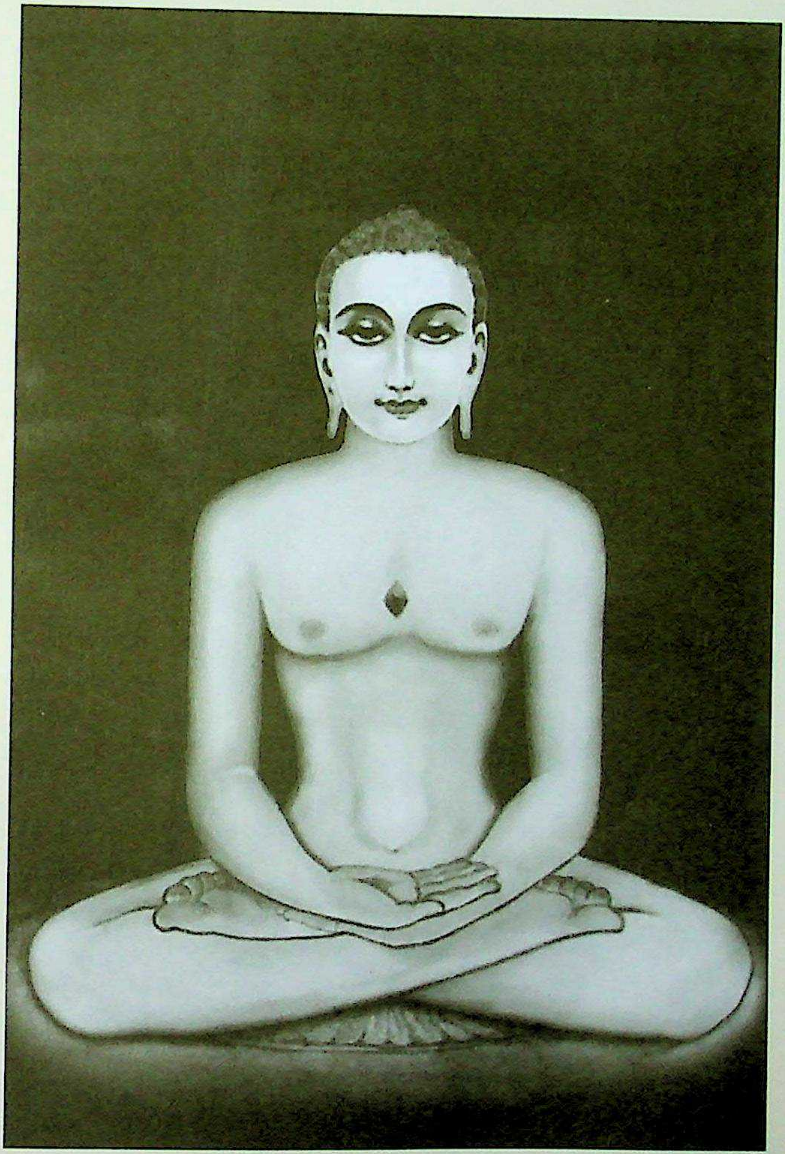

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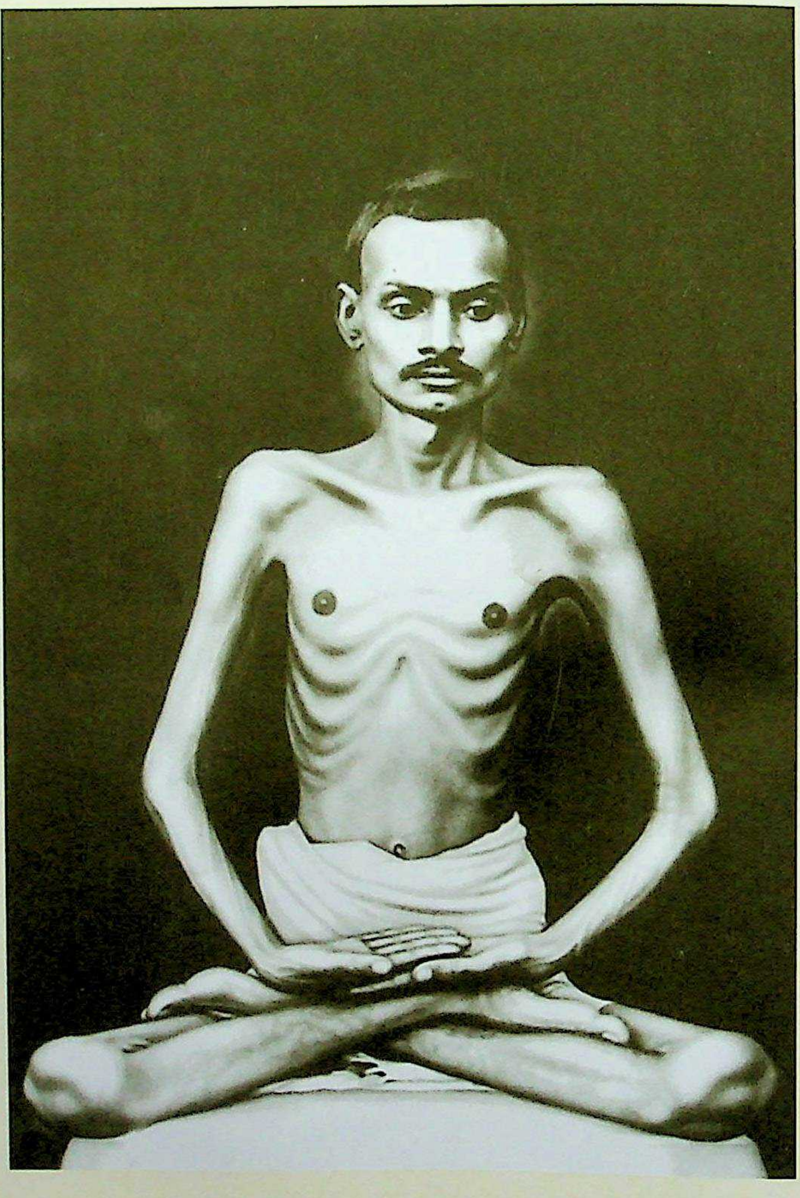

Shrimad Rajchandraji

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Preface

'Whether I possess a body or not, is something that I barely know upon recollection.' (Patrank-255)

'I am supremely detached from this world; even if it were to turn into gold, for me it has no more value than a blade of grass; and being in His Grace, is my place of worship.' (Patrank-214)

The wealth of Indian culture has time and again been made resplendent with the light of dharma by the presence of remarkable Enlightened Masters who have elucidated the essence of religion and thus enhanced spiritual development. But even in the tradition of such hallowed and supremely divine Souls, One who stands at the forefront because of His brilliance, outstanding effort of societal welfare through religion, excellent literary creations and other such virtues; whose name evokes great respect, is Param Krupalu Dev Shrimad Rajchandraji. An able torchbearer in present times, an epitome of spirituality and an exceptional figure of benevolence, His life represents an incessant saga of spiritual practise, a blossoming of numerous virtues.

Having attained self-realisation through unprecedented spiritual effort, this detached Yogi has left behind invaluable literary gifts of prose and poems

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dealing primarily with subjects of spirituality and its practise for true aspirants. Springing effortlessly from the profoundness of the Soul, His literary works have and will continue to immensely benefit many in their spiritual upliftment.

With the noble intention of affording a path of peace, to give a taste of nectar to the suffering masses through the contemplation of Param Krupalu Dev's inspiring life and pristine poetical creations, His ardent disciple and founder of Shrimad Rajchandra Mission Dharampur, Pujya Gurudevshri Rakeshbhai authored 'Shrimad Rajchandra – Jeevan ane Kavan'. It was published for the first time in Gujarati language in 2001 A.D. on the centenary of Param Krupalu Dev having left His earthly coil.

By appropriately highlighting various events in Param Krupalu Dev's life, Pujya Gurudevshri has given us a glimpse of His intrinsic wealth. He has taken us on an extensive tour of His literary creations which demonstrated His focus on the soul and freedom from any preconditioning. Guided by the present book, thousands of aspirants have been introduced to the divine spiritual practices that Param Krupalu Dev carried out during His lifetime. Over the years, by contemplating on His spiritually uplifting literature, they have made strides on the right path. This text, by depicting how Param Krupalu Dev has achieved in 33 years what may

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not be possible to achieve even in 33 eons, has proved to be a source of inspiration to thousands of seekers. It has kindled and augmented devotion for Param Krupalu Dev in thousands of hearts.

This composition creates awareness about Param Krupalu Dev's extremely inspiring life and His benevolent and spiritually uplifting literature. Considering its innumerable benefits, it was decided to reprint the first Gujarati edition. Furthermore, to celebrate the Mission's 20th year, the laudable resolution to translate and publish the book in various languages also took shape.

Since Pujya Gurudevshri's childhood, drawn by His divine persona, various seekers had sought spiritual guidance from Him. As the group of spiritual seekers increased significantly, under His guidance, on the auspicious day of Maha Shivratri, 10th March, 1994, a trust - 'Shrimad Rajchandra Adhyatmik Satsang Sadhana Kendra', was formed. This endeavour of constant spiritual study, contemplation and upliftment completes 20 years of development. It was felt that to commemorate such a special occasion, the virtues of Param Krupalu Dev, the One who has supremely benefited the world, should be extolled. The world should drink the inspiring nectar of His life and works and reverberate with His divine knowledge and beautiful poetical creations.

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To realise this aim, it was decided to take inspiring incidents from Param Krupalu Dev's life and glimpses of His uplifting literature and publish them in various languages so as to reach and benefit a wide spectrum of humanity. Param Krupalu Dev's transcending literature was at present available mainly in two languages – Gujarati and Hindi. It was felt that the latter section of the book, inspiring a deep study of His works would prove highly beneficial to readers of those two languages, Pujya Gurudevshri's original book – 'Shrimad Rajchandra – Jeevan ane Kavan' was translated entirely only in Hindi language. Nevertheless, Param Krupalu Dev's heart rending life, with the vision of world upliftment, is capable of enabling anyone to undertake the righteous path of spiritual welfare and succeed in kindling effort to attain completeness. The glory of His spiritually inspiring life is now being published in Marathi, Bengali and Tamil besides Gujarati and Hindi in all five Indian languages; and five international languages – English, French, Spanish, Mandarin and German – a total of ten languages.

On the auspicious occasion of the completion of 20 years of this spiritual organisation, 'Shrimad Rajchandra Adhyatmik Satsang Sadhana Kendra', which has been enormously beneficial in the upliftment of many souls, it gives us great pleasure to publish 'Shrimad Rajchandra – Jeevan ane

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Kavan', penned by Pujya Gurudevshri, in ten immensely popular languages of the world, in the above context. We are enthused at the thought that through this publication, the character sketch of this Supreme Master, will spread across the world, leading everyone to the path of spiritual welfare. Under this endeavour, the English translation of the first half namely, 'Shrimad Rajchandra – Saga of Spirituality', is being published. We express our heartfelt gratitude to all those who devotedly contributed towards its publication.

We pray at Param Krupalu Dev's Lotus Feet that by a steady pursuit of the present text which illustrates His intense spiritual practices, may all beings aspire to attain the spiritual state He achieved, and work towards realising that state themselves.

'May the world be uplifted by the blessings of the Enlightened Ones.'

Maha Shivratri
V.S. 2070
Dated: 27-2-2014

Sincerely,
The Trustees,
Shrimad Rajchandra Mission
Dharampur

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Foreword

On the occasion of the centenary celebration of Shrimad Rajchandra's having left His mortal coil, the Shrimad Rajchandra Gyan Mandir Trust at Rajkot, His final resting place, requested me to write a foreword for the book 'Shrimad Rajchandra - Jeevan ane Kavan', being published under the auspices of Shrimad Rajchandra Param Samadhi Shatabdi Mahotsav Samiti. Furthermore, I consider it a great honour to have the opportunity of writing a foreword for this excellent book because of the personal relationship I share with the author, Bhaishri Rakeshbhai Jhaveri.

Shrimad Rajchandra is an exceptional self-realised being of our times. A perusal of His spiritual literature, gives us a glimpse of His exalted spiritual state. Several of His spontaneously uttered expressions have become commonly used idioms. Many people have learnt them by heart. Anyone who reads His 'Vachanamrutji' even once with interest and an open mind, cannot help but be impressed by it. His words have the unique power to naturally draw the reader towards them again and again with a profound attraction. One is inspired to read and experience the words repeatedly, only to discover a new meaning every time. Shrimad's words have

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transformed many souls and turned many more towards the right path. His writing often seems to echo one's own inner self.

Shrimad Rajchandra's hallowed personality was equally impressive. Whoever came in close contact with Him, was drenched in His exalted spiritual state and spiritual practices. In that respect Shrimad's life was like a living philosopher's stone; in fact, even better. Someone with as high an intellect as Mahatma Gandhi accepted Shrimad, who was barely a year and nine months older than him, as his spiritual guide. Upon having his doubts cleared by Shrimad, Mahatma Gandhi decided against changing his religion. This in itself is enough to gauge Shrimad's high spiritual calibre. If Shrimad had, per chance, the longevity of Mahatma Gandhi, there would have been a great revolution in our religious and spiritual fields.

Shrimad Rajchandra's life is replete with inspiring incidents. In a short span of 33 years He transformed many people through His direct acquaintance or through correspondence! Who would not want to know about the life of such an Enlightened Master? That is why from time to time there have been various books, small and large, written and published about His life and works. Bhaishri Rakeshbhai's volume, being published on the centenary of Shrimad's having departed from the

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earth, is a laudable and novel effort in the same direction. Owing to a mystical and incomprehensible relationship with Shrimad from His past life; unwavering devotion and profound studies in the present, Bhaishri Rakeshbhai is especially eligible to write this text.

This text is, in fact, a part of His thesis. He has written a voluminous thesis on 'Atmasiddhi Shastra' in 1997 for his Ph.D. degree from Mumbai University (which has now been published). One of the chapters in it is about Shrimad's life and writings (literature in a wider context). That chapter is being revised and published as an independent text. There is a special scholarly style in writing a thesis that incorporates numerous footnotes and extracts. That is why, to publish this chapter on the life and works into a book that would have mass appeal, required a complete revision of the original. With this in mind, there have been appropriate changes made in the chapter, some new information incorporated, other material condensed wherever necessary. Thus, much effort has gone into making the book an interesting and independent text.

So far, many books have been published on Shrimad Rajchandra's life and literature. But the speciality and utility of this book is that all the information available until the present has been included and beautifully portrayed. It is for the first time that so

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many details about Shrimad's life, some small while others large, are obtained in one text. It is for this reason that it has created a special niche for itself among all the biographies written about Shrimad. This text being the outcome of an overall study of all available literature of, and on Shrimad, seekers will be able to read many details about Shrimad for the first time in it. The research done on what was traditionally believed to be Shrimad's date of birth as per the A.D. calendar is also a strong point of this text.

Bhaishri Rakeshbhai deserves our felicitations for creating such an authentic, detailed, inspiring and interesting text on the life and literature of Param Krupalu Dev Shrimad Rajchandra.

May Shrimad Rajchandra's life and literature be an inspiring force in the spiritual pursuits of many a seeker!

Mumbai: 17/3/2001 Ramanlal C. Shah

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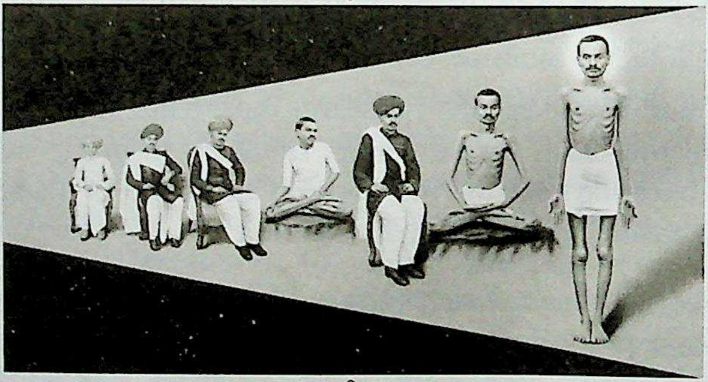

Shrimad's different states

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(1) Introduction

In this vast world and especially in the sacred land of India, many great men, realised masters and enlightened beings have lived in the past, exist in the present and will be born in the future. Even amongst them, it is, has been, and will always be extremely rare to find those who have reached an exalted state of spiritual purification, scaling the towering heights of benevolence and uplifting themselves and others.

Amongst these remarkable entities, Shrimad Rajchandraji, the embodiment of compassion, is one of the greatest men of the present era. A glorious incarnation of this age, an able torchbearer, the personification of divinity who effortlessly abided in the Self and was endowed with keen intelligence; this supremely divine saint holds a special, reverential

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and eternal place in the history of spirituality. Shrimad Rajchandraji is an unparalleled luminary of knowledge who can be placed in the distinguished ranks of great masters of the present century – who have scaled the exalted heights of spiritual evolution and attained self-realisation.

Earning a prominent place in the garden of spirituality and spreading the unique fragrance of self-realisation, this magnificent, pre-eminent flower manifested several distinctive qualities from a very young age. Coloured in the hues of devotion, detachment and knowledge, this great personality was a born poet, had an exceptional power of retention, was a staunch social reformer and a strong advocate of the Indian culture. He was a valiant spiritual practitioner who possessed many extra-sensory perceptive abilities. Shrimad was an unmatched shatavdhani, an accomplished astrologer, a masterful bestower of wisdom and a mellifluous orator with a pure character. His extraordinary personality, retentive power, insight, poetic prowess, imagination, proficient logical analysis, fearlessness, simplicity, purity, wisdom and many such outstanding virtues have been lauded greatly by many renowned scholars.

A description of Shrimad's multifarious abilities in various fields and His extraordinariness, that would leave miracle-lovers awestruck and many incidents proving His divinity can be found in His life account.

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However, it is not because of these merits that He has attained this most distinguished place of pride amongst the contemporary spiritual masters; He has earned this distinction by His other exceptional virtues.

Shrimad Rajchandraji was a divine personality who had attained a high degree of saintliness, but the pattern of His life was unlike that of other saints and great beings of India. The ancient age of Indian culture has witnessed many rishis and seers who have ignored the allures of the material world to meditate in ashrams or forests, thereby attaining the ultimate state. Shrimad, on the other hand, was a householder and spent the better part of His life in the midst of business activities. He bore worldly responsibilities almost until the end of His life. In spite of this, His life blossomed like a lotus, untouched and untainted by the mire of these worldly responsibilities. Bharat Chakravarti and King Janaka have been given a hallowed mention for achieving this exalted state while living in the world. Likewise, Shrimad spent His life as a householder, met the challenges of social responsibilities and yet remained untouched by worldly affairs. Without forgoing any duties, He attained enlightenment, liberating Himself and many others. His life is a noteworthy exception in contemporary world history. Munishri Punyavijayji (Jignasu) elucidates:

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'Shrimad defeated delusion, while remaining in the house of delusion itself! This can be achieved only by an exceptional, extraordinary, resolute One like Him.'[1]

Relentlessly immersed in the pursuit of purifying the soul, this saint par excellence devoted His entire life to the attainment of enlightenment. His life was an unbroken saga of spiritual pursuit. He remained unaffected by worldly events and circumstances. Through His conduct, He showed that the following characteristics are necessary to progress along the spiritual path: restraining lust; controlling desires; mastering the passions; disciplining the mind and shifting one's outward focus, inward.

One can see a beautiful blend of spirituality and religiousness in His life. Adherence to spirituality means being devoted to knowing internally, the essence of the self and externally, the essence of the world. That is, to have a deep yearning to experience the most subtle aspect and the most expansive nature of the truth. Adherence to religiousness is a ceaseless and irrepressible effort to weave into life whatever one has experienced of the truth. Though His contemplation upon the soul was completely influenced by the Jain philosophy, nowhere in His life, works or literature does one

1- Munishri Punyavijayji (Jignasu), 'Shrimad Rajchandra - Jeevanjyoti', 3rd edition, page 10

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get even a glimpse of sectarian narrow-mindedness. Shrimad had carried out an in-depth study of the six schools of philosophy.

His notes on Vedanta philosophy would befit a qualified student. He would even advocate the reading of Hindu scriptures to spiritual aspirants. This only goes to show that this distinguished torchbearer was completely free of sectarianism.

Shrimad's noble virtue of non-sectarianism; His pristine, transparent personality and His simple life which was embellished by detachment – these qualities immensely influenced Mahatma Gandhiji, drawing him towards Shrimad. Among the three great men he considered as his guides, Mahatma Gandhiji considered Shrimad as foremost, being his spiritual guide. This only attests to Shrimad's utmost importance in Mahatma Gandhiji's life.

'This man has won my heart in spiritual matters, and no one else has ever made on me the same impression. I have said elsewhere that besides Kavi (Shrimadji), Ruskin and Tolstoy have contributed in forming my intrinsic character; but Kavi has had a more profound effect because I had come in personal and intimate contact with Him.'[1]

In spite of being continuously entangled in worldly

1- 'Modern Review', June 1930

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affairs, He remained constantly focused on Truth and the Self; the glory of such a saintly and virtuous one's noble character is described elsewhere by Mahatma Gandhiji in the following manner –

'We are all worldly people, whereas Shrimad was not of this world. We will have to take many births whereas for Shrimad perhaps one birth is sufficient. We will perhaps be running away from liberation whereas Shrimad was advancing towards liberation at a very fast pace.'[1]

In the present age, the One who unveiled the true nature of spirituality and lived a life of enlightenment, venerable Shrimad Rajchandraji's life of spiritual endeavours and noble views and virtues is a tremendous inspiration to all. Therefore, to walk on the path of liberation, let us get a bird's-eye view of His sanctifying life.

1- Edited by Shri Gopaldas Jivabhai Patel from 'Shri Rajchandra (Jivanyatra and Vicharratno)', 2nd edition, Raichandbhaina ketlak smarano, pages 88-89

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(2) Birth and Early Childhood

'Bahuratna Vasundhara' – the earth is studded with jewels. Fulfilling this saying, several luminaries have been born in the land of India. Among them, the world has found many saints, spiritual revolutionaries and exceptional personalities from the sanctified, fertile soil of Saurashtra. One such unique jewel of the 20th Century of Vikram Samvat (V.S.), Shrimad Rajchandra was born in the peaceful, picturesque port town of Vavania, in the hallowed land of Saurashtra.

Shrimad's grandfather, Shri Panchanbhai, was a resident of Manekwada in the district of Morbi. He separated from his brothers in V.S. 1892 (1836 A.D.) and bought a house in Vavania. Shrimad was born in this house, which is how Vavania, the home town of Shrimad's grandfather, received the honour

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The house where Shrimad was born, in Vavania

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of becoming Shrimad's birthplace.

Shri Panchanbhai initiated a shipping and money-lending business in Vavania. He was a devotee of Lord Krishna. His son, Shri Ravjibhai, was born in the year V.S. 1902. At the age of fourteen, Ravjibhai began a moneylending business in Vavania and other nearby villages like Chamanpar. He followed the Vaishnav religion as well. Kind-hearted and charitable, he would readily distribute food and clothing to the needy and devoutly serve monks, saints and fakirs. He was married to Devbai, daughter of Shri Raghavjibhai of Maliya. Her name reflected her virtues – simple and cultured by nature, she was the epitome of good character, loving kindness and humility. Born in a Jain family, she was endowed with Jain values and followed the Jain way of life, even after marriage. She served her in-laws with great care and concern. They were immensely pleased by her wholehearted service and blessed her time and again from the bottom of their hearts that she may give birth to an extraordinary child.

Lives of great men are usually surrounded by a number of auspicious omens. Thus, prior to Shrimad's birth, this devoted couple had earned the blessings to parent a son who would become the leading light of the family. As Devbai did not have a son, she paid a visit to yogini Rambaiba of Vavania, who reassured her that she would bear a

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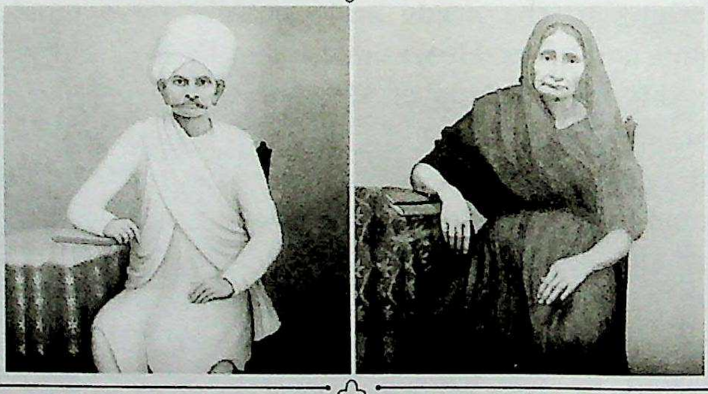

Shrimad's father Ravjibhai   Shrimad's mother Devbai

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son who would be resplendent like the full moon and become the crowned jewel amongst poets. She further informed that He would bring fame to their family and to Saurashtra; temples would be built in His honour and every word uttered by Him would be instrumental in liberating both, the seekers as well as the wise. Likewise, Shri Ravjibhai had sincerely served a fakir for a long time. This fakir had predicted that Ravjibhai would be blessed with an illustrious and extremely fortunate son.

On the auspicious day of Devdiwali, V.S. 1924 – the Sunday of Kartik Purnima (November 10, 1867 A.D.[1]) at two in the morning, these devoted and selfless parents were blessed with a beautiful child as radiant as the full moon, Shrimad Rajchandra. This blessed day of Kartik Purnima has been associated with many other extraordinary personalities of the world. On Kartik Purnima in V.S. 1145, about 800 years before Shrimad's birth, a great protagonist of the Jain religion, the highly inspirational Kalikaalsarvajna Acharyashri Hemchandrasuriji was

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1- Traditionally, Shrimad's birth date is believed to be on November 9, 1867 A.D. However, based on modern research, it has been reported here as November 10. By meticulously studying the panchang – Hindu and Jain calendar and thoroughly searching the internet for Western calendars, it has been confirmed that Kartik Purnima of V.S. 1924 was a Sunday, the 10th of November, 1867 A.D.

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born. The founder of the Sikh religion, Guru Nanak, was also born on this pious day. Dravid, Valikhill and many other divine souls attained liberation from Mount Shatrunjay on this day. Blessed was that moment when a divine soul like Shrimad was born, blessed were His parents, blessed His lineage and blessed was the village of Vavania. Before His birth, there was a continuous discord between Kutch and Morbi over the ownership of the bay waters in Vavania, which led to a breakdown in trade. But, while Shrimad was still in His mother's womb, a peace treaty was reached. In the months of Maha and Fagan in V.S. 1923, the harbour of Vavania was restored to its former glory and trade flourished.

The parents and family members were overjoyed at the birth of a son and named Him Laxminandan. However, the name was changed to Raichand four years later, in V.S. 1928. This name prevailed until, with the passage of time, this remarkable self-realised personality came to be known as 'Shrimad Rajchandra', a name indicative of His virtues.

Shri Ravjibhai and Devbai had six children in all. The eldest among them was Shivkunvarben. She was married to Shri Chatrabhuj Bechar of Jetpar. Shrimad Rajchandra was the second born. He married Jhabakbai. The third was Meenaben, who wed Shri Tokarshi Pitamber from Anjar, Kutch. The fourth was Jhabakben. She married Shri Jasraj

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Doshi of Vavania. The fifth was Shri Mansukhbhai. His wife was also named Jhabakbai. The youngest of them was Jijiben, who was married to Shri Jhaverchand Malukchand from Sayla. Thus, Shri Ravjibhai had a large family.

The first seven years of Shrimad's childhood were spent in innocent play, ambitious ideals and the desire to remain at the forefront in life. Even in play, He would always aspire to win and attain high ranks, like that of a sovereign. Clothing, cleanliness, food, sleep and other activities were carried out with detachment. His physique was weak and His demeanour reflected innocence. His pleasant countenance and soft and sweet words endeared Him to all. Many virtues naturally blossomed in Him, such as simplicity, brilliance, purity, desirelessness and the like. His extraordinary intellect and memory seemed to indicate that the Goddess of learning, Saraswati, had blessed Him right from birth. Thus, this future Mahatma possessed a unique personality right from His childhood.

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(3) Recollection of Past Lives (Jatismaranjnan)

Jatismaranjnan means attaining the knowledge of one or more of one's own past lives. Jatismaranjnan is a sub-division of dharna, meaning retention, which is itself a division of matijnan – knowledge acquired with the help of the five senses and the mind. If a person sees a particular place or thing when he is a child, when he becomes an adult, certain events trigger memories of it; in the same way, a person who has attained jatismaranjnan can perceive the imprinted impressions of his previous lives, seeing them as vivid personal experiences projected on the screen of his mind. Shrimad had attained such jatismaranjnan. The incident that triggered jatismaranjnan occurred in V.S. 1931, when He was just seven years old. From that time onwards, it increased progressively. Shrimad has not directly mentioned His attainment of

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jatismaranjnan or the incident that brought it about in 'Samucchayvaycharya' or in any of His other works, but one does find indirect mention of it in a few places in His writings.

Shri Padamshi Thakarshi, a merchant of Kutch, has recorded the incident which brought about Shrimad's jatismaranjnan. Once, he met Shrimad in the Digambar Jain temple in Mumbai, near Bhuleshwar's vegetable market, and enquired about this knowledge. It was then that Shrimad narrated this incident. In Vavania, there was a noble householder by the name of Shri Amichandbhai who showered much affection on Shrimad. When Shrimad was seven, Shri Amichandbhai died from a snakebite. Upon hearing the news, the young boy asked His grandfather what it meant to die. Concerned that explaining the true meaning of death would frighten the child, His grandfather diverted His attention by asking the boy to have His meal. He further tried to change the topic of discussion. But out of intense curiosity about death, Shrimad persistently returned to the same question. Ultimately, obliged to explain, His grandfather answered that to die meant the soul had left Amichandbhai's body; now his body would not be able to make any movements, speak, eat or drink. Therefore, his mortal remains would be burnt in the cremation grounds near the lake. Upon hearing this, Shrimad pensively paced back and

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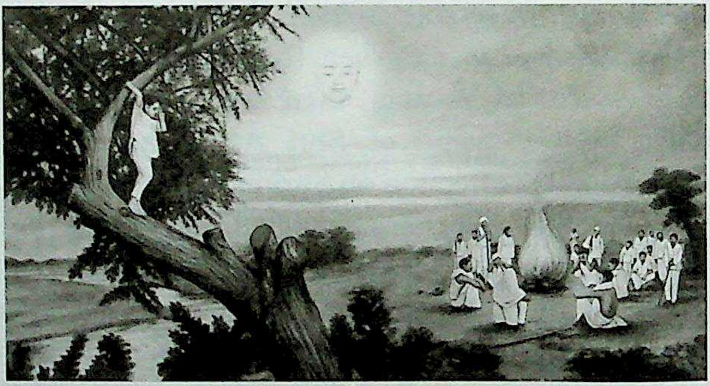

Shrimad's attainment of jatismaranjnan at the age of seven on seeing a burning funeral pyre in Vavania's crematorium

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forth in the house for some time and then secretly went to the lake and climbed onto a two-branched babul tree. From there, He witnessed the blazing funeral pyre and saw people gathered around it. He was mortified to see someone He had known well, someone so loving, being burnt. His mind was in great turmoil. What cruelty to burn such a nice and loving man! What was the reason behind it? He pondered upon the truth. Since the body remained the same as before, what exactly was it that had left the body? Hence, the body and the embodied (soul) definitely must be two separate entities. In this manner, Shrimad delved deep into the realm of thoughts, and this churning ultimately led to jatismaranjnan. As the veil over His memory was lifted, He was able to know His previous lives.

Later, seeing the fort of Junagadh widened the boundaries of His jatismaranjnan. When He travelled through the hills of Idar, this knowledge was furthered even more. In the hills of Idar, when He was with Shri Lalluji Muni and other monks for a few days, He described His past lives, telling them where He was, how He used to sit, where He lived and other details. In the wilderness of Uttarsanda, Shrimad once advised an aspirant by the name of Shri Motilal Bhavsar not to indulge in indolence and lack of passion for liberation. At that time, He disclosed that He Himself was, in

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a previous life, a disciple of Bhagwan Mahavira, and lived in His close vicinity. In that life He had made a slight lapse in awareness by shifting His attention to answer nature's call. As a result of this indolence, His transmigrations continued until the present. Shrimad had told Shri Kalyanjibhai that He could recollect 800 previous births. Elaborately relating to one of His past lives, He had said to Shri Khimjibhai, "You have greatly obliged me", – an incident which was noted by Shri Damjibhai.

In His writings, there is no concrete evidence of His attaining jatismaranjnan at the age of seven, but in His autobiographical poem, He states, **'In 1931, I attained unprecedented recollection.'**[1] One can infer that this mention of unprecedented recollection could be signifying His jatismaranjnan. And, **''There is rebirth – definitely so. For that, 'I' remain steadfast in saying yes from my own experience.' This sentence has been written out of the conviction of having recollected some incident from the past life. Having somehow known that 'element' which has desired rebirth and so on, I have written this sentence.'**[2] Besides, one gets glimpses about His knowledge of His past births in patranks 212, 313, 465 and others. By

1- 'Shrimad Rajchandra', 6th edition, page 801 (Haathnondh-1, 32)
2- Ibid., page 361 (Patrank-424)

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reading and reflecting upon these, those who are insightful will be convinced of His jatismaranjnan.

Shrimad would not get into lengthy discussions about jatismaranjnan with people. He was deep and profound, like the sea, and would generally never allude to His knowledge about His previous births. If He incidentally mentioned it to someone for any reason, He never elaborated upon it. He would discourage any curiosity regarding it.

The jatismaranjnan that He attained at the age of seven played a pivotal role in transforming His perception of the world. Having understood its ephemeral nature, detachment came naturally to Him. His progressively increasing dispassion and yearning for liberation in every situation, which were evident in Him at a very young age, were the natural outcome of His jatismaranjnan. After attaining jatismaranjnan, He became aware of the physical, mental and worldly trauma as well as the pain from birth, old age and death that He suffered in His previous lives. He could recall the sermons imbibed from seers He had encountered in His past lives. He was also aware of the knowledge, meditation and austerities of His past lives. For such a One, the intensity of detachment from the world and eagerness for liberation that He experienced is difficult for an ordinary person to even imagine. Completely convinced of the existence of His soul

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and its immortality, His activities towards attaining liberation were conducted with increased conviction and the progression of His spiritual life gained great momentum. The soul, karma, the relation between the two, freedom from karma – liberation and such thoughts manifested. Even though He was physically a child, as several experiences of His past lives became vivid, His knowledge matured far beyond His years. Thus, even as a child, the knowledge He acquired as a result of His detachment and discrimination can be chiefly attributed to jatismaranjnan.

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(4) Educational Advancement and Religious Impressions of Childhood

It is evident from His acquisition of jatismaranjnan that Shrimad carried the legacy of the profound knowledge of His past lives into His present one. This explains the remarkable intellectual prowess He displayed since His birth. Sharpness of memory, simplicity of heart, clarity of speech, purity of thought, profoundness of nature and other virtues blossomed in Him since childhood. His extraordinary acumen developed at a rapid pace, as is evident from the speed with which He completed His studies.

Right from the outset, Shrimad was a child with incredible intelligence. At the age of seven, He was sent to school to receive formal education. Shri Ravjibhai requested the headmaster not to be harsh with Shrimad, so the headmaster in turn asked the teacher, Shri Lavjibhai, to treat Shrimad with

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love and care. Shri Lavjibhai wrote the numbers 1 to 5 on a slate and asked Shrimad to practise them. Shrimad wrote them instantly. At first, Shri Lavjibhai assumed that Shrimad was gifted because He was taught at home, but then Shrimad similarly copied the numbers from 6 to 10, 11 to 20, and 21 to 100 with the same ease. Thereafter, He wrote and recited the multiplication tables from 1 to 10, just as Shri Lavjibhai had done. After that, Shri Lavjibhai wrote the multiplication table of 11 and the alphabet, which Shrimad replicated right away. The teacher was astonished. He instructed Shrimad to write and read aloud the first 5 or 6 lessons from the Gujarati Primer. Again, they were reproduced in the exact manner. Shri Lavjibhai was amazed by this and narrated the incident to the headmaster. The headmaster summoned Shri Ravjibhai, and upon enquiring whether Shrimad had been taught at home, Ravjibhai replied that he had bought the slate and chalk only the previous day. Hearing this, Shri Lavjibhai understood that this soul had carried forward intellectual acumen from His previous lives. Shri Pranlalbhai, an educational inspector and the external examiner for the fourth standard, who hailed from Morbi, was also extremely impressed by Shrimad.

Thus, Shrimad's remarkable receptivity and sharp memory enabled Him to grasp everything the first

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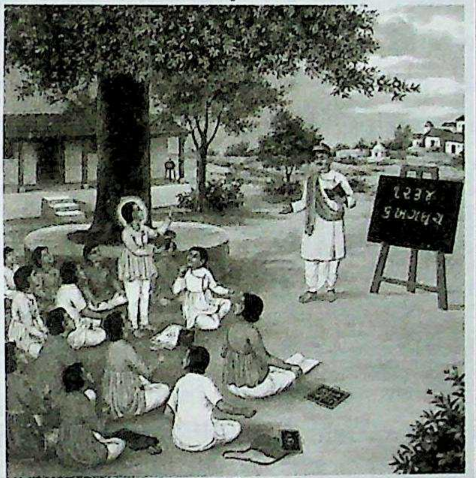

Shrimad's astonishing grasping power and sharp memory

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time He read it or heard it from His teacher. Unlike the other children, He never had to revise anything due to His extraordinary power of retention. He completed the curriculum in Gujarati, equivalent to seven standards, in a span of just two years. Referring to this ability to retain knowledge by reading it just once, Shrimad states in His 'Samucchayvaycharya' –

'The memory was so powerful that very few people would possess such a memory in this time and place. I was very carefree when it came to studies. I was talkative, playful and happy-go-lucky. I would read the lesson only while the teacher made us read it, and was able to explain the meaning. I was quite complacent about this.'[1]

Shrimad was dearly loved by His classmates and teachers as an extremely intelligent, bright and loving student. There is a well-known incident which shows how much His classmates cared for Him. Once, young Raichand was rebuked by His teacher, so He did not attend school the next day. When the other students noted His absence in school, they went to where He was, and together, proceeded to a far-off field. Meanwhile, the teacher did not find any students in school. He realised that this was the

1- 'Shrimad Rajchandra', 6th edition, page 204 (Aank-89)

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outcome of his rebuking young Raichand. So, His teacher set out to look for the students. He found them in the field and persuaded young Raichand to return to school. A bright and most trustworthy student, He would help the teacher by correcting other students' classwork. His openness, courtesy, simplicity, dependability, oratory skills, extraordinary art of teaching and other attributes all added up to make Him a favourite amongst His peers.

Shrimad was very well read. Right from childhood, He took keen interest in amassing knowledge and exploring new avenues of thought. He was an avid listener and reader with a deep curiosity for learning. He would read whichever book He could lay His hands on and retain its gist. Besides the books from His curriculum, He read books of poetry and many other spiritual works. At the age of 13, He left for Rajkot to study English, but there is no documented evidence of how long or until what level He pursued it. He knew functional English, had a good command over Sanskrit and Prakrit and could effortlessly read and comprehend texts in those languages. Though He was gifted with a sharp intellect and greatly developed power of retention, His innate detachment dissuaded Him from undertaking a classical study of these languages.

After the age of 13, He joined and looked after His father's business. There, He did not waste His

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time in play or trifles, but used it effectively for reading, reflection, composing poetry and other worthy pursuits. He was a conscientious child and never failed in His duties. While managing His father's shop, He conducted Himself in a just and fair manner, without committing any irregularities in pricing or weighing merchandise.

Shrimad displayed His unusual creativity during these formative childhood years. His power to compose poetry was as remarkable as His memory. From a very young age, He had impressive oratory skills – He could piece together imaginative stories and tales and narrate them in a lucid and engrossing manner. He could compose poems spontaneously, and started writing poetry at the age of eight years.

He had written approximately 5,000 couplets at the age of eight, but these are not currently available.

At the age of 9, He studied the great epics, 'Ramayana' and 'Mahabharata' and accomplished the extraordinary feat of weaving them into verse.

At the age of 10, He could deliver interesting speeches on many subjects with great skill.

At 11, as a consequence of deep reflection, He could write mature articles with the astuteness of a wise author. These were published in 'Buddhiprakash', which was considered the best and most respectable

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magazine in those days. He even won prizes for His essays.

By the age of 12, His command over poetry had blossomed beautifully. In merely 3 days, He had written 300 couplets on a clock.

Thus, befriending paper and pen in His adolescent years, His knowledge found an intellectual outlet and He became well-known as 'Kavi'.

Right from childhood, Shrimad was renowned in Vavania as a scholar and was the centre of attention. The diwan of Kutch at that time, Shri Manibhai Jashbhai, invited Him to Kutch, where He delivered a captivating lecture on religion. The audience was greatly impressed. His handwriting was so beautiful and calligraphic that He would be specially invited to the Royal Court in Kutch to write. Shrimad's fame reached two residents of Kutch, Shri Hemrajbhai and Shri Malshibhai, who came to Rajkot with the intention of taking Him to Kashi for higher studies. However, they were so awestruck by His extraordinary knowledge that they felt, 'What is left to teach such a capable one as He!' Since they had personally experienced Shrimad's abilities, and because He politely but firmly and convincingly declined their offer, they returned. Thus, from childhood, Shrimad exhibited exceptional wisdom, discrimination and decision-making prowess.

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The seeds of spirituality, too, were sown in Him as swiftly as the incredible speed with which He progressed in His schooling. He received a wonderful religious legacy of Vaishnavism from His paternal side and Jainism from His maternal family. His grandfather was a devotee of Lord Krishna whereas His mother, Devbai, had brought the Jain tradition along with her. There were other merchant families in Vavania who also practised Jainism. Therefore, besides His mother, He was also surrounded by a Jain environment. Due to this, in His childhood, He was influenced by both the Vaishnav and the Jain traditions.

Shrimad was initially more influenced by the Vaishnav ways. He had listened to devotional verses on Lord Krishna from His grandfather; which led to love for God and His incarnations. He would often attend discourses depicting stories of the Lord and would be duly impressed by the miracles narrated therein. At times, He even aspired to be a head priest and travel from place to place to narrate tales of the Lord. He paid obeisance to Lord Krishna regularly. He had cultivated a liking for the Vaishnav customs and had also received the symbolic kanthi – a beaded necklace reiterating one's faith in that religion, from Shri Ramdasji, a Vaishnav monk. The Jain merchants often discussed this with Him and sometimes even teased Him about it, but Shrimad

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would try to intellectually reason with them. The merchants, largely, belonged to a sect of Jainism that did not believe in idol worship. He also found their rituals to be tainted, and the fact that they did not believe in God as the creator made Shrimad develop a certain aversion towards them. However, as time elapsed and His understanding changed, the culture of Jainism, which was instilled in Him by His mother, gathered strength. Due to His association with the followers of Jainism and His interest in reading, He had the opportunity to read books on Jainism such as the Pratikraman Sutra and many others. Based on the profound ideals of forgiveness, friendliness and non-violence, the principles of Jainism deeply touched His heart. He saw how Jainism advocated a friendly disposition towards all living beings, and this augmented His love for it. Between the Vaishnav religion, which is predominantly based on adorning the Divine, and Jainism, which is based predominantly on dispassion, His elevated soul, seeking higher realms, was increasingly attracted towards the Jain ways. In the meantime, His kanthi broke when He was 13 years old and He did not wear it again.

It was thus that gradually, His religious beliefs underwent a complete change and by the time He was 13, He had become fully coloured by Jainism. It was not due to any sectarian or dogmatic prejudice,

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but as an outcome of a comparative study and unbiased intellectual reflections that His faith in Jainism became unshakeable. Even at a young age, His powers to examine all facets were so sharp that He could comprehend the profound elements of Jainism. Thereafter, the deeper He delved into its philosophy, the more He realised its far-reaching generosity and vastness. This led Him to become an ardent devotee of the Jain religion and a pillar of strength for Jainism in the days to come.

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(5) Religious Churning

After completing His schooling, Shrimad earnestly commenced an intense, contemplative study of the scriptures. Owing to His inclination towards liberation, when He was only 13 years old, He began studying scriptures related to detachment and the true nature of elements. He did not have to make much effort to acquire this knowledge – because of His pure intellect He could understand all the scriptures with utmost ease. He was able to quickly read books in Prakrit and Sanskrit, even though He had not acquired a formal education in those languages. In barely 15 months, He had read all the Agams – Jain canons. The very first time He read a scripture, He could fully grasp its essence. Moreover, due to His tremendous power of retention, He could virtually memorise most scriptures by heart.

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His knowledge of the Agams was so thorough, deep and comprehensive that He was aware of even the minutest details. Shrimad had a certain inner capacity that often enabled Him to understand scriptures without even having to read them. When He would study the scriptures, someone seated by His side would assume that He was just flipping pages, barely glancing through them. The fact was that He would fully and deeply comprehend the entire scripture He was reading.

Shrimad, the literary genius, voraciously read the entire religious literature available in His birthplace, the town of Vavania. Yet His thirst for knowledge was insatiable, and He continued to procure books from other places. Moreover, His scriptural knowledge was not limited to a particular sect – He amassed a great wealth of knowledge of various religions and religious sects. His intellect was so refined that He could easily decipher a profound subject such as philosophy and had the capacity to garner the spiritual essence directly from the main scriptures of all religions. He meticulously studied almost all the main Indian scriptures. Remaining unbiased, like a judge, He studied the profound elements of the six principle Indian philosophies, namely: Vedanta, Sankhya, Nyaya, Buddhism, Jainism etc., evaluating each one on its individual merits. Now, Shrimad turned His truth-seeking,

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analytical and keen intellect towards deliberating upon various religions in the quest for a complete philosophy. He had undertaken the herculean task of churning the deep oceans of the six schools of thought to extract the nectar of truth. As a result, this period, between ages 13 to 16 is known as His period of religious churning.

During this time span, Shrimad's detailed deliberation on the six philosophies and His unbiased analysis and conclusions about them is evident. Without any inappropriate insistence or predisposition for any particular school of thought, He evaluated each with a clear conscience. He perceived Jain philosophy to be consistent throughout and ultimately developed a firm faith in Jainism, the religion of the Dispassionate Ones. Shrimad's childhood inquisitiveness and dreams of becoming an emperor, desire to renounce the world and various other thoughts now converged towards spirituality. Shrimad was completely enchanted by the non-absolutist Jain philosophy, which establishes and explains the existence of the soul, its eternal nature, the soul as the doer of karma, the enjoyer of the fruits of karma, liberation and the path to liberation as well as the means to attain it. Thus, He intellectually accepted it and faithfully pursued it.

Thus, right from His youth, His thoughts were well defined and mature; virtuous and spiritual;

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disciplined and benevolent. His spiritual capacity and the light of His knowledge was glowing brighter. As His contemplations became more mature and concrete, He penned them down to share with others. His literary writings were also a response to the rigid, orthodox religious practices that prevailed in both Jain and non-Jain communities at that time. He found that there was a world of disparity between the objectives and application of spiritual practices which were originally described in Jainism and the current practices of monks and householders. Shrimad also observed that people were not reading and reflecting upon the original scriptures. As a result, out of either ignorance or tradition, monks and householders had adopted inappropriate conduct which had become firmly rooted in their lives. Unable to fully observe the austere conduct of an ascetic, as described in the scriptures, the monks deliberately diluted, distorted or concealed the ideals they were obliged to follow. Superstition, dogmatism and discord dominated the Jain monks of those times. This greatly grieved the principled and conscientious Shrimad. His childhood aspiration to lead humanity to salvation was becoming more resolute with time; therefore, there arose in Him a fervent desire to awaken humanity from the slumber of rigidity and indolence. To prevent the children and youth from becoming waylaid by erroneous beliefs, He decided to write books for them in

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very simple language. His extraordinary wisdom imbibed the essence of numerous texts on varied subjects. Therefore, He was able to create texts that helped seekers develop a correct understanding of detachment, discrimination and discipline – all of which are essential for liberation. In this manner, Shrimad channelled His wisdom towards spiritually uplifting all of humanity.

Shrimad's vast reading, deep reflections and extraordinary detachment enabled Him to write a text titled 'Mokshmala' in V.S. 1940, when He was only sixteen years and five months old. He completed this text in just three days. This profound book on philosophy, which was written in a scriptural style and appealing language, incorporates 108 lessons of philosophy and uses parables to depict the otherwise difficult to fathom Jain tenets in an interesting manner. In this book, He has elucidated upon the three essentials of liberation: right belief, right knowledge and right conduct, presenting them in an unbiased manner. He published the book Himself. There was a delay in publication, so in V.S. 1942 He wrote the book 'Bhavnabodh', to appease the buyers who had reserved their copies in advance, gifting them a copy of the new book along with their order for the previous one. The book lucidly explains the 12 bhavnas – sentiments that a sincere seeker should cultivate and develop.

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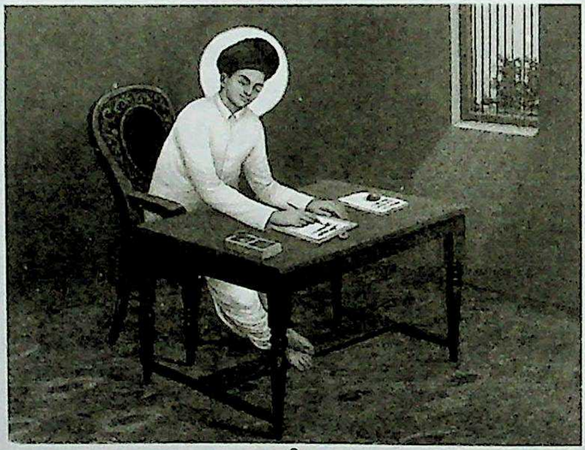

Shrimad composes 'Mokshmala' in only three days at the age of 16 years and 5 months

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It contains interesting examples that invoke great dispassion within the reader. Shrimad's response to the delay in printing attests to His judiciousness, acumen and moral responsibility towards others.

During this time, Shrimad experienced an extraordinary state of detachment. He had once mentioned that during the creation of 'Mokshmala', He experienced the same state of detachment as that of Shri Ramachandraji, described in the chapter on detachment in 'Yogavashishtha'. It reached such an extent that Shrimad would not even remember whether or not He had eaten. This intense detachment is clearly discernable in the chapters in 'Mokshmala' that pertain to this subject. Shrimad's detachment progressively increased, and during the creation of 'Bhavnabodh', it reached such a crescendo that it finds a mention in His autobiographical poem, which immortalises the main incidents of His life –

'1942, adorned with a surge of extraordinary detachment.'[1]

Thus, a Wise One like Shrimad judged, without prejudice, various philosophies on the anvil of His wisdom – evaluating each one based upon its logic and applicability for the attainment of the Self. The

1- 'Shrimad Rajchandra', 6th edition, page 801 (Haathnondh-1, 32)

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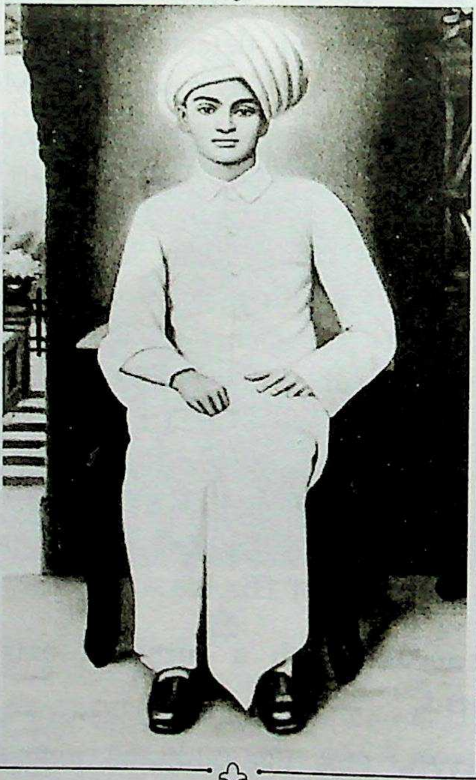

Age 16 Shrimad Rajchandra V.S. 1940

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pure dharma, ideas and philosophy that He found to be complete in all respects was the unique, vast and exact philosophy propounded by the Dispassionate Ones. Only here did His keen, investigating mind find respite; it settled and stabilised in Jainism with unflinching faith and conviction. On the basis of this philosophy, His entire life was illuminated with divine splendour.

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(6) Extraordinary Powers Manifested in Youth

(i) Avdhanshakti

Due to strong impressions carried from past lives and His powerful intellect, Shrimad manifested extraordinary power of retention, poetic prowess, oratory skills and many other exceptional qualities. Right from childhood, Shrimad had a strong desire to learn new things. The moment He encountered something new, He would be greatly enthused to acquire it. He would immediately try to reproduce anything good that He came across and in a short time, better it. A most befitting example of this is His amazing 'avdhanshakti', which was seen around the year V.S. 1940.

Avdhanshakti is a special power of retention, in which a person can simultaneously remember many things and without committing a mistake, focus his

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attention on multiple tasks. This ability is a sub-division of matijnan (knowledge acquired through the five senses and mind) called dharna-retaining over a period of time, the knowledge thus acquired. A person with this special ability is referred to by a name which indicates the number of tasks he can perform simultaneously. That is to say, a person is known variedly as ashtavdhani (8 tasks), baar avdhani (12 tasks), sol avdhani (16 tasks), bavan avdhani (52 tasks) or shatavdhani (100 tasks), depending on his capabilities.

For an exceptionally brilliant personality like Shrimad, Vavania was too small in scope, offering scant opportunities to meet scholars, so He was inclined towards travelling. In V.S. 1940, when Shrimad was 16 years old, He travelled to Morbi. Here, Shastri Shankarlal Maheshwar Bhatt used to perform eight avdhans. In the same period, Shri Gattulalji Maharaj also performed eight avdhans in Mumbai. As per the available records, these were the only two people who exhibited such a feat in India, and they were being showered with accolades and acclaim for their miraculous achievements. If, in a vast land such as India, there were but two who had such a power at that time, one can indeed comprehend how incredible it was.

Around the time that Shrimad arrived in Morbi, a viewing of Shastri Shankarlal's eight avdhans had been organised in the sacred Jain shelter for

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monks. Shrimad, who was known at the time as 'Vanikbhushan Kavishwar' – the merchant poet, was invited to attend. Due to His powerful intellectual acumen, Shrimad was able to grasp the technique immediately upon watching this performance. He repeated the feat the very next day in Morbi's Vasant Garden in the presence of a few friends, performing a different set of eight tasks. The following day, in the same sacred Jain shelter for monks, He successfully performed 12 avdhans to an audience of 2000 people, astonishing all. Like musk, the fragrance of His fame spread far and wide – to every place and every home. Already renowned as a poet and a scholar, He was now known for His incredible power of retention as well. The enthusiasm with which people attended His avdhan performances can be gauged by an excerpt from the memoirs of His childhood friend, Shri Popatbhai Manji –

'My father, Manjibhai, had gone to Morbi. There, he was astounded by the incredulous eight avdhans performed by Sahebji. When he returned to Vavania that night, instead of coming home, he first went to Ravjibhai's house. Knocking at their front door, he woke him up, exclaiming, Ravjibhai your son is divine! He has done something amazing!'[1]

Thereafter, Shrimad visited Jamnagar for some

1- 'Shrimad Rajchandra Ardhashatabdi Smarak Granth', 2nd edition, page 98

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personal work. Amidst Jamnagar's intellectuals, He performed 12 and 16 avdhans in two separate assemblies, using two different means. Both audiences were delighted at the phenomenal performance and honoured Him with the title 'The jewel of Hind'. There were two people in Jamnagar who had spent the past 8 to 10 years investing great effort in mastering the art of performing avdhans, but in vain. So the erudite audience was all the more astonished at Shrimad's performance of 16 avdhans and developed high regards for Him.

Thereafter, He performed 16 avdhans in Wadhwan in front of a packed audience of 2000 people, which included Colonel H. L. Natsaheb, royalty, members of the Cabinet of Ministers, and other esteemed guests. The audience went into raptures, receiving the performance with thunderous applause. Everyone wholeheartedly praised this amazing power. The British royalty, government officials and the erudite were left spellbound. One speech followed another, all extolling Shrimad. They were overjoyed by the fact that such a gem existed in India in the present times. 'Gujarati', 'Mumbai Samachar', 'Lokmitra', 'Nyayadarshak' and other dailies lauded His performance.

After 16 avdhans, Shrimad directly performed 52 avdhans in Botad in the presence of His wealthy friend, Sheth Shri Harilal Shivlal. He did this with

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utmost ease, without any undue effort or prior preparation. This provides an idea of His intellectual prowess, extraordinary self-confidence and courage. The following information gives an idea of the 52 avdhans He performed[1] –

1) Play the game of chaupat (a kind of checkerboard) with three other players.	1
2) Play cards with three people	1
3) Play chess with one person	1
4) Keep count of the sound of a small gong	1
5) Mentally compute arithmetic sums involving addition, subtraction, multiplication and division	4
6) Keep count of the movement of beads along a thread	1
7) Solve eight new problems	8
8) Compose verses on sixteen diverse topics selected on the spot, and in the specific meter chosen by various members of the audience	16
9) Rearrange 400 words of various languages spoken in a random order – Greek, English, Sanskrit, Arabic, Latin, Urdu, Gujarati, Marathi, Bengali, Maru, Jadeji etc. in the right order of subject, predicate while performing other tasks	16
10) Teach a student	1
11) Contemplate on various figures of speech	2
	52

1- 'Shrimad Rajchandra', 6th edition, page 134 (Patrank-18)

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All 52 tasks are to be started together. After a part of the first task has been performed, move to the second, then third, fourth, fifth and so on until a part of each of the 52 tasks has been accomplished. Now, move back to the first – this process continues until all 52 tasks are completed. Nothing can be jotted down or asked again; everything has to be committed to memory until all 52 tasks are accomplished.

Upon witnessing Shrimad's unique power, one scholar calculated that He could memorise 500 shloks (couplets) in an hour. At this juncture, His power of retention had reached its zenith. Though His formal education was only in Gujarati, Shrimad could exactly reproduce the same words, poems or verses in any language at any speed that any person had recited, maintaining the order in which they had been originally spoken. In fact, a person could recite 100 verses in any Indian or international language just once, and Shrimad would repeat them exactly, with the correct pronunciation.

He also demonstrated His powers in Jetpar, Ahmedabad and other places. In V.S. 1943, He performed these avdhans extensively in Mumbai. In an assembly held at the Theosophical Society, He tested His keen intellect and composing skills by asking people who knew English, Spanish, German, French, Latin, Zend, Sanskrit, Bengali and Persian (a total of nine languages), to write down a six-word

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sentence in each language. He then asked them to recite the words in random order. He would rearrange the words to reproduce the original sentence while simultaneously composing two poems, each in a different raga. One gentleman requested Him to weave the name, 'Rustamji' and a description of the assembly into the poems He composed. Shrimad honoured his request. Then He completely calmed His mind and started the avdhans while composing the poems. Various gentlemen were throwing random words at Him in different languages; Shrimad registered them all while simultaneously composing and dictating lines of the poems. If any of the gentlemen erred in their speech, He would immediately point it out. Once all the words were spoken, Shrimad flawlessly reproduced them exactly as they had been written and recited the poems He had composed, which described the assembly and had Rustamji's name woven in the line, '**Ru**chi lok sama**sta**ni **m**ann sa**ji** vidyavilase gayi.' At the end of the show, Rustamji Ardeshar Master presented Shrimad with a garland and a bouquet of flowers on behalf of the assembled group.

Thereafter, on Saturday, January 22, 1887, when He was 19 years old, He gave a public demonstration in Framjee Cawasjee Institute, Mumbai. The meeting was presided over by Dr. Peterson. Also present were other elites from various fields to witness Him perform 100 avdhans. The spectators gave Him ten

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Shrimad's demonstration of Shatavdhan at Framjee Cawasjee Institute in Mumbai on Saturday, 22-1-1887

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six-word sentences, one from each of the following languages: Sindhi, English, Telugu, Kannada, Marathi, Sanskrit, German, Persian, French and Portuguese. The words were spoken in a random order, one after the other. Shrimad committed them to memory and amidst a roar of applause, fully reproduced them in the correct order. He also recited the poems He had composed, maintaining poetic metres. Everyone was utterly amazed.

In addition to His avdhan powers, Shrimad also possessed a unique tactile sense. First He was shown a dozen books of various sizes and was told their titles. Then He was blindfolded. The books were placed in His hands in random order and He was able to identify each one simply by feeling it.[1] This astonished Dr. Peterson. He congratulated Shrimad for His astounding memory and awarded Him a gold medal on the successful completion of the performance, conferring Him with the honourable title of 'Sakshat Saraswati'. People everywhere were showering Him with praises for this extraordinary display of uncommon powers – He had become greatly renowned as a 'Shatavdhani'.

Shrimad's rapid progression from 8 to 12 to 16 to 52 and then to 100 avdhans displayed His tremendous intellectual acumen, and He unfurled

1- He had performed a similar feat in Mumbai's Arya Samaj Hall, under the auspices of Justice Telangna.

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the flag of success. Powers that others strived hard to develop were innate in Him, they came to Him effortlessly. Detailed front page write-ups extolling His extraordinary powers were regularly and extensively printed in reputed Gujarati and English newspapers such as 'Mumbai Samachar', 'Jaame Jamshed', 'Gujarati', 'Times of India' and 'Indian Spectator' to name a few.

The historical facts of Shrimad's avdhan demonstrations have been passionately recorded by His contemporary and companion, Shri Vanechand Popatbhai Daftari in the book, 'Sakshat Saraswati'. In September 1893 in Chicago, USA, Shri Virchand Raghavji Gandhi attended the Parliament of World's Religions by the inspiration of Shri Atmaramji Maharaj (Shri Vijayanandasuriji). Alluding to the fact that India had historically been the birthplace of some personalities who possessed extraordinary powers, in one of the speeches he made in Chicago, Shri Virchand Gandhi cited the example of Kalikaalsarvajna Acharyashri Hemchandrasuriji and also stated that in present times, Jainism could still be credited with contemporaries who possessed such powers. He substantiated his point by elaborating upon Shrimad's extraordinary capabilities.[1]

1- Edited by Bhagu F. Karbhari, from 'The Jain Philosophy', Speech and Writings of Virchand R. Gandhi, pages 116-120

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Impressed by Shrimad's astounding powers, the Chief Magistrate of Mumbai High Court, Sir Charles Sergeant, invited Him to Europe to showcase His powers. However, Shrimad politely declined because He felt that He would not be able to follow all the tenets of Jainism in Europe. An English daily went so far as to proclaim that anyone possessing such powers would be worshipped in England or elsewhere. Nevertheless, Shrimad was inclined towards delving into the depths of the soul, and hence did not show any interest in the proposition. This exemplified His lack of interest in fame of any sort – in India or abroad. In spite of being young, He was not tempted in the least to grab the opportunity to make a name or attain fame.

Let alone going to Europe to perform shatavdhans, Shrimad had already resolved that henceforth, He would not perform them, even in India. Had He wished, He could have been a celebrity and amassed great wealth through this power, but recognition and material gain were not His aim. Spiritual advancement was His goal. The soul is infinitely powerful; shatavdhan and other feats of memory represent just a tiny part of that incredible power. Moreover, if He was carried away by pride by performing these feats, it could tantamount to losing out on spiritual growth, which was why Shrimad viewed avdhan demonstrations as a hindrance in the

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path of spiritual progress. Therefore, He believed it was wise to stop them and instead, focused all His efforts towards self-realisation. Finding that the gains accrued and the praises received from His avdhan powers intruded upon His search for the soul, He terminated the time and energy loss that it brought and refocused it on realising the soul. He thought that the recognition He received through these public interactions might be detrimental to His spiritual growth. He felt that He may completely miss His spiritual purpose because the time He could have spent in spiritual pursuits would be lost in these demonstrations, and He could scarcely afford that. This thinking prevented Him from seeking public adulation and interaction. Instead, He found it worthwhile to pursue activities for the benefit of the soul. Having decided accordingly, He suddenly disengaged Himself from the public eye. When He was at the peak of His popularity, He discontinued all public exhibitions. Though His powers of memory dazzled the world, Shrimad viewed them to be as insignificant as a blade of grass.

People chase fame, but Shrimad shied away from it, even rejected it, completely removing Himself from the all-consuming vortex of worldly achievements. This shows His unusual greatness. Without a doubt, performing demonstrations like shatavdhan etc. was something truly great, but deciding to discontinue

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them was far greater indeed. Shrimad realised that spiritual pursuit and the expansion of avdhan activities were mutually exclusive and that avdhans would hinder His spiritual progress. His desire to find true happiness, coupled with His innate detachment and indifference, right understanding and purity of mind, did not allow Him to continue to expand His avdhan activities beyond the age of 20. At the age when an ordinary person vainly runs after wealth and fame, Shrimad, at age 20, found it worth forsaking. Thus, He had scaled great spiritual heights. Pandit Sukhlalji has aptly written –

'Shrimad's astonishing avdhan power itself is proof of His extraordinary memory. Even in that, there is His uniqueness. Firstly, unlike the other avdhanis, His number of avdhans had not just increased for the sake of the increment. The second and more important distinction was that His ability to perform avdhans was not dampened from any propensity to show off His intellectual prowess. Rather, the intellect became the cause of remarkable creativity rarely seen in other performers. Most noteworthy, of course, is the fact that by His exceptional avdhan powers, He could have instantly dazzled thousands or even lakhs of people, making them His followers and thus attaining exceptional status and unbound wealth. However, He considered

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these demonstrations worth giving up, like yogic powers, and instead, utilised His unique strengths for inner transformation. This is not possible for any ordinary person to do.'[1]

(ii) Astrology

Shrimad received the same brilliant success in astrology as He did as an avdhani. Astrology is a science based on the continuous observation of planetary motion. When a person has a question, or when a child is born, the planetary configuration at that exact time is drawn on paper, and a horoscope is made by calculations based upon those planetary conditions. Inferences are drawn and the events of the future are predicted accordingly. The accuracy of the forecast is directly proportional to the precision of the mathematical calculations and the depth of study of the inferences to be drawn. A very small incident became a trigger for Shrimad to progress rapidly in the study of astrology.

In V.S. 1942, in the month of Aso, as He was on His way to Mumbai for an avdhan performance, Shrimad stopped in Jetpar, at the home of His brother-in-law, Shri Chatrabhuj Bechar. At that time, Shrimad was financially constrained. Financial gain was also one of the reasons for His visit to Mumbai. At that

1- Edited by Shri Gopaldasbhai Jivabhai Patel, from 'Shri Rajchandra na Vicharratno', page 155

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time in Jetpar, there was a renowned and learned astrologer, Shri Shankar Pancholi, who was well-versed in mathematical computations to forecast the future. Shri Chatrabhuj Bechar asked the astrologer about Shrimad and His visit to Mumbai for financial gains. Drawing a horoscope based on the time of the question, he predicted that in a short while Shrimad would go to Mumbai and within a certain period, achieve considerable financial gains. Shrimad did leave for Mumbai, but He did not succeed in gaining financial benefits in the time predicted – Shri Shankar Pancholi's prediction was not wholly correct. If the study of astrology is exact, the prediction should also be precise. So how was it that his prediction was only partially, and not entirely correct? This curiosity led Shrimad to study astrology in such a way that He could correctly forecast the entire future. This became the trigger for Shrimad's in-depth study of astrology.

During the shatavdhan performances in Mumbai, many learned people, pundits, and elites were present in the auditorium. Amongst them were also some highly qualified astrologers, who were naturally drawn to the young and talented Shrimad after watching His wonderful avdhan powers. Ten astrologers got together and studied Shrimad's horoscope to see the planetary position at the time of His birth. They ascertained it to be 'Parmeshwar

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Graha' – a divine planetary configuration. From them, Shrimad received a scientific methodology of studying astrology which satisfied His curiosity. Through them, Shrimad achieved His goal of learning astrology. Such was His mastery of the subject that His knowledge soon surpassed that of the scholars who were instrumental in teaching Him. Shrimad, with His exceptional memory and intellect, quickly learnt astrology in its entirety. Regarding this, Shri Mansukhbhai Kiratchand Mehta writes –

'In this lifetime, at such a young age, in such a short time, having such specialised knowledge in astrology, poetry and other subjects and imbibing the essence of scriptures written in unfamiliar, traditional languages such as Sanskrit or Magdhi – it appears as if these subjects were experienced in some past life and are being recollected in the present; fitting evidence of the soul's infinite and eternal nature, proof of rebirth and so on.'[1]

In V.S. 1945, when Shrimad was 21 years old, He had stayed in Bharuch during the months of Magsar and Ashadh at the home of an elderly orthodox Jain, Sheth Shri Anupchand Malukchandbhai, who was also well-versed in astrology. Shrimad

1- Shri Mansukhbhai Kiratchand Mehta, 'Shrimad Rajchandra ni Jeevanrekha', page 27

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had meticulously studied 'Shri Bhadrabahusanhita', the exceptional Sanskrit text written by Chaud Purvadhar Shri Bhadrabahuswami, to gain an insight into astrology. Shri Anupchand Malukchand has mentioned this fact in his book, 'Prashnottarratnachintamani' as part of his reply to the 121st question, which discusses the maximum age that one can live to in the present time. This incident may have transpired while Shrimad was staying at his residence, during a chance mention of 'Bhadrabahusanhita', in one of their conversations.

Shri Shankar Pancholi, who had made Shrimad's question-based horoscope in Morbi in Aso of V.S. 1942, was spellbound when he witnessed Shrimad demonstrate the 'nashtavidya' of astrology in Jetpar a year later, in the month of Aso of V.S. 1943. Nashtavidya is a form of astrology in which one can predict the year, month, lunar day, day of the week and time of a real horoscope in which the details are not mentioned. Amazed by this extraordinary demonstration, Shri Shankar Pancholi requested Shrimad to teach it to him, imploring that the knowledge was invaluable to a Brahmin, as he could earn thousands of rupees and be greatly revered by using it. At that time, there was only one scholar in Kashi who possessed that knowledge. So saying, he requested Shrimad to be kind enough to teach it to him. In response to the request, Shrimad told

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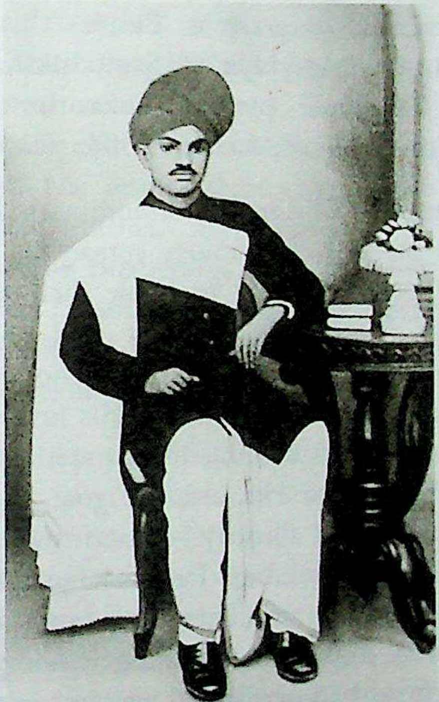

Age 19 Shrimad Rajchandra V.S. 1943

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him that this knowledge could not be gained simply by having someone teach it. It required phenomenal memory and a highly focused and calm mind. It is a mathematical subject that can be learnt from a master willing to teach only the one with a strong potential to grasp it. Besides this, Shrimad had mastered Angavidya or Samudrikshastravidya, whereby He could predict the entire future by studying one's hands, face and other features.

As the fame of Shrimad's extraordinary knowledge about the science of astrology spread far and wide, hoards of people wished to know their astrological predictions. Eventually, He felt that the activity was becoming an obstacle to His chosen spiritual path. As a result, He considered His involvement in astrology to be detrimental to His spiritual pursuits and a hindrance to His ultimate goal. He also felt that astrology was illusory – not firmly rooted in reality – and therefore He became increasingly indifferent towards it. There was another reason, too, for His dispassion towards astrology. In V.S. 1945, Shrimad had performed avdhans in the walled compound of Sheth Dalpatbhai Bhagubhai's home in Ahmedabad. Here, many people availed of His knowledge of astrology. On being questioned about an ailing person, Shrimad realised his untoward end, and His tender heart was deeply moved. At the time, He answered truthfully and then said,

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"Am I to give you such sad news?" However, this incident so deeply affected His compassionate heart that He became even more indifferent towards astrology. Shrimad, a highly proficient astrologer, felt burdened by this knowledge and completely discontinued using it in V.S. 1947, turning His back to it forever. Thereafter, He never answered anyone's queries about such matters – He would appease them by saying that what is to happen will happen. Once, when His respected mother enquired about an ill person, Shrimad informed her that He had stopped making predictions and that what is fated will transpire. Dharma is to accept whatever happens with equanimity. That is knowledge, that is astrology, that is prediction – and that is the way to be free.

Shrimad's soulmate, Shri Saubhagyabhai, was undergoing a great financial crisis since V.S. 1947 and had written several letters to Shrimad enquiring about astrology, mantra, siddhijog and other such topics. Perturbed by his financial difficulties, he would repeatedly request Shrimad to use astrology to predict his future, but Shrimad would tell him to let go of all anxieties and accept the prevailing circumstances with equanimity. Shrimad would advise him on the illusory nature of astrology and counsel him not to give it even one thought. The pearls of wisdom that He compassionately and discerningly wrote to Shri Saubhagyabhai show His

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absolute indifference towards astrology. In a letter to Shri Saubhagyabhai in the year V.S. 1948, on Fagan Sud 14, Shrimad writes –

'I have read the details of certain astrological texts that you have mentioned. I am aware of a major part of it, and yet, the mind cannot be engaged in it at all. Even though reading or hearing about it could be amazing, however I find it burdensome. I have not the slightest interest in it.

I am only interested in the knowledge of the never before experienced Truth.'[1]

Elsewhere, He elucidates –

'Ever since experiencing the Truth, I have pledged not to use any kind of divine powers or intellectual faculties towards worldly attainments for Myself or others; and until now, I cannot recall even a moment of slackness in that pledge.'[2]

Thus, Shrimad would often discourage even His much beloved Shri Saubhagyabhai from using astrology. This in itself illustrates Shrimad's views about how strongly He considered astrology to

1- 'Shrimad Rajchandra' 6th edition, page 321 (Patrank-339)
2- Ibid., page 314 (Patrank-322)

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impede spiritual progress and the dispassion He must have felt towards astrology. Such a wondrous power could have easily brought Him fame and ensured a great influx of wealth, but Shrimad categorised it as illusory and completely stopped using it. It neither took Him long to learn astrology nor to forsake it. Such an attitude can belong only to the One who has attained great spiritual heights.

(iii) Miraculous Powers

As a result of Shrimad's pure conscience, miraculous powers manifested in Him. Shrimad acquired miraculous extrasensory powers of perception which were apparent ever since His childhood through the annihilation and suppression of His knowledge-obscuring karma. These powers increased steadily over time. Through certain instances from His life and His writings, one can firmly ascertain that He possessed avdhijnan or clairvoyance, a type of knowledge which enabled the perception of objects within a certain limit, when focused upon.

Besides this, various other types of miraculous powers had also manifested in Him. Purity of knowledge enabled Him to know incidences that would occur in the future and to read what was transpiring in other people's minds. There are several noted incidences in which He predicted someone's birth or death or tacitly warned about

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something untowardly in order to avert it.

Shrimad was about 13 years old when He travelled to Rajkot to meet His maternal uncle. At that time, two brothers, Shri Hemrajbhai and Shri Malsibhai from Kutch, were on their way to Rajkot to meet Shrimad with the noble intention to 'take Shrimad to Kashi for further studies.' Shrimad was not intimated about this, but in His pure knowledge, He could foresee the two brothers undertaking a long journey, travelling on a camel in order to see Him. He therefore arranged for their stay at Shri Dharshibhai's residence; not only that, He even went to meet them on the way as they were approaching. Though He had never seen or met them before, He greeted them both by their names, asking, "How do you do Hemrajbhai? How do you do Malsibhai?" Both brothers were surprised and wondered, 'We have not informed anyone about our visit, so how could He recognise us and greet us by our name?' They asked Shrimad, "How did you know that we were coming this way, at this particular time?" Shrimad replied, "The soul has infinite powers; I know through them."

In Vavania, there was a man named Shri Virji Desai, whom Shrimad addressed as 'kaka'. Once, when they were out for a stroll, Shrimad asked him, "Kaka, should something happen to your wife, would you remarry?" Shortly after that, his wife passed away.

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Afterwards, when they had a chance to go for a stroll, Shrimad asked the question again and told Shri Virji Desai that if he intended to remarry, he should do so after six months. Six months later, a snake slithered out of a drain pipe and fatally bit Shri Virjibhai.

Similarly, when Shri Dalichandbhai, a resident of Vavania, lost his mother, Shrimad instructed his father, Shri Vrajlalbhai that, "You must not remarry." Shortly thereafter, Shri Vrajlalbhai also passed away.

Shrimad had predicted Shri Juthabhai's death two months prior to the incident, stating the exact time and lunar date of his demise. This prediction was accurate with a difference of merely a few hours. Shrimad had also written to Shri Chaganlal Becharlal asking him to inform Shri Juthabhai about his imminent passing.

Once a Rajput who lived near Shrimad's house went on a horseback ride. He met Shrimad along the way. Shrimad repeatedly insisted that he abandon the idea of going riding, but the man did not heed the advice and rode the horse beyond the outskirts of the village. There, the horse became violent and the Rajput was thrown off. Later, four bystanders wrapped him in a sheet and carried him home, but he died soon after.

One day, as His father was about to leave for

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Chamanpar, Shrimad asked him not to go that day. Shri Ravjibhai did not heed this request and left. At dusk, Shrimad's younger brother Mansukhbhai's shirt caught fire as he was entering the kitchen. Jhabakben used her presence of mind and doused him with all of the buttermilk from an earthen vessel, but Shri Mansukhbhai still sustained burns on his chest.

Besides such prophecies, Shrimad could unmistakably tell who was holding the trump card in the game of cards and surprised everyone by pulling out the required card.

Just by examining the shape of a person's head, Shrimad could discern which hand he used to tie his turban. Once, He was sitting in a shop in Jetpar. A bare-headed man would be called from outside and made to stand in front of Him. Without fail, Shrimad was able to tell the manner of with which twist that particular man used to wear his turban. After He had successfully examined almost 15 people, one person was told, "When it is your turn to stand in front of Shrimad, tell Him that what He says is not true. Say that I do not tie my turban that way – I tie it with my other hand." The man did as he was told. Hearing this, Shrimad asked the man to wear his turban accordingly. The man tried to tie it in that artificial manner, but everyone could clearly make out that he had lied.

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The spectators were amazed at this turn of events. They asked Shrimad the reason for this exceptional power. He explained that in His consciousness, He could perceive the person's form, and that the left and right sides have their distinct features, making it possible for Him to differentiate. But, this perception was not possible without the required purity of consciousness.

Shrimad could also tell how a particular dish tasted simply by looking at it – without even touching or tasting it. Just by looking at a particular dish, He could tell which items had less salt, more salt, or no salt at all. Shri Chhotalal Revashankar Anjaria from Morbi, Shrimad's childhood friend, once tested this power. Shrimad's father-in-law's brother, Shri Revashankarbhai, had invited guests over for a meal. While everyone was playing cards, Shri Chhotalalbhai quietly disengaged himself from the others, sneaked into the kitchen and told the cook that Shri Revashankarbhai had especially made the following request: put the usual proportion of salt in the dal; only put turmeric but no salt in the legumes; and put extra salt in the green vegetable dish. The cook complied. The food was served and all sat to eat. Shrimad looked at the dish for some time and then laughingly turned to Shri Chhotalalbhai, asking whether he was trying to test Him or whether the cook had erred. He said, "The legumes do not have any salt and the green

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vegetable has too much." Shri Revashankarbhai tasted it and found this to be true. He began admonishing the cook, but Shri Chhotalalbhai intervened and clarified that the cook had prepared the food according to his instructions, and that he was trying to test Shrimad. Everyone present was astonished by Shrimad's powers of perception.

Shrimad also possessed a keen sense of smell. Once, Shrimad and Shri Revashankarbhai were invited to dine at the home of Shri Meghji Thobhan. Through His keen sense of smell, Shrimad could tell everything that was being prepared in the kitchen, which was about 25 feet away. He later mentioned to Pundit Lalan that He ate through His nose. Surprised, Shri Lalan enquired how that was possible. Shrimad replied that without even having a look at it, He could know what had been cooked in the kitchen.

The power of knowing another person's feelings had manifested in Shrimad. For Shrimad, who had truly delved within, discerning another person's inner thoughts was very easy. He would often state another person's questions before they were raised. Even without asking them, everyone's questions would be resolved in His discourses, making the questions redundant – such was the experience of several spiritual aspirants.

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Shri Mansukhbhai Kiratchand Mehta from Morbi often experienced Shrimad's intuitiveness. Shrimad would often begin His conversation with answers to whatever questions he had decided to ask. But at the end, Shrimad would still enquire, "Mansukh, do you have anything to ask?" Whatever had to be asked had already been clarified in their conversation, putting all queries to rest. This was not an uncommon occurrence. One day in Chaitra of V.S. 1955, Shri Mansukhbhai went for a stroll in the afternoon, as his college was closed for a holiday. On his way, he happened to be thinking about tithis – particular lunar days when Jains observe solemnity. Why were only beej (second), pancham (fifth), atham (eight) and chaudas (fourteenth) considered religiously significant days? Why were chauth (fourth), chhath (sixth), satam (seventh), naum (ninth), or teras (thirteenth) not significant instead? Harbouring this doubt, he visited Shrimad. Without any preliminaries, He pronounced, "Mansukh, you must observe the tithis." Shrimad's pure knowledge was a mirror which could reflect the doubt that had surfaced in Shri Mansukhbhai's mind.

In his personal memoirs, Shri Manilal Gandhi of Botad has written about his own experiences of Shrimad's intuitiveness. During Shrimad's visit to Hadamtala in V.S. 1951, Shri Manilalbhai went there to meet Him. Shrimad, along with Shri Saubhagyabhai,

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Shri Dungarsibhai and others was having a meal in a room adjacent to Shri Manilalbhai's. Due to space constraints, Shri Manilalbhai did not sit with them. Even though the meal had already been served, he too longed to sit with Shrimad and eat with Him. He imagined how delightful that experience would be. Shrimad informed the devotees about Manilal's eagerness to be with Him and asked them to make some space for him. Immediately, one of them escorted Shri Manilalbhai to the meal. While eating, he began to think how happy he would be if Shrimad insisted upon serving him a couple of extra rotis. Shrimad then asked one of the devotees to serve rotis to Manilal. He further asked that Manilal be given ghee and sugar. In this way, Shrimad, who was love personified, fulfilled Shri Manilalbhai's wish to sit with Him and eat together.

Besides this, Shri Chhotalal Revashankar Anjaria of Morbi writes in his memoirs –

'On any occasion, if any one of us would start saying something, Shrimad could tell what the person's intention was. Many friends would deny that, but in the end it would be proven that they had indeed intended what He had said.'[1]

Numerous incidences like these from Shrimad's

1- 'Shrimad Rajchandra Ardhashatabdi Smarak Granth', 2nd edition, page 100

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life establish the exceptional powers manifested in Him. Yet, He never used them to become famous or impress others. Right from His childhood, these miraculous powers were present in Shrimad and as His soul became increasingly pure, the powers multiplied. No one really knows what exactly these powers were or their nature, as He never divulged details about them to anyone. However, one thing is certain: He never made any deliberate effort to manifest these powers and seldom used them. Shrimad writes –

'I do not ever recall entertaining even the slightest thought of mastering any miraculous powers in my entire life, so they do not seem to have manifested by any deliberation. If such divinity has manifested itself due to the purity of the soul, I cannot deny its presence. This divine wealth is possible to a certain extent; while writing this letter, I am aware of it, but otherwise, it has been latent in my memory for a very long time. So it cannot be said that there has ever been a desire to reveal it. This is absolutely certain.'[1]

1- Shrimad Rajchandra, 6th edition, page 374 (Patrank-450)

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(7) A Householder's Life

Values of religion and detachment were deeply ingrained in Shrimad since His childhood. As He grew, His soul-focused studies, reflections and contemplations matured. At the same time, His detachment was also increasing. He aspired to adopt the life of an ascetic and therefore He was not eager to get married in the least. However, His parents and relatives were coercing Him to enter matrimony. When His parents refused to grant Him permission to renounce the world, Shrimad, against His wish, had to resign Himself to the fate of marriage. Despite harbouring a deep, innate desire for renunciation, the twist of fate created by His preordained karmas carried Him to the marriage altar. So, although His soul was filled with detachment, in Posh of V.S. 1944, He departed from Mumbai and returned to Vavania. On Maha

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Sud 12, Shrimad wed Jhabakbai, daughter of Shri Popatlalbhai Mehta – the elder brother of the jeweller Shri Revashankarbhai Jagjivan and Dr. Pranjivandas. Thus, Shrimad tied the knot with Jhabakbai and commenced the life of a householder. While returning from His wedding in Morbi, saffron water drizzled on His vehicle, a sign of Him being bestowed with the title of 'Yugpradhan' – a great leader of His times.

From a very young age, Shrimad's views on marriage were extremely mature, respectful and profound. He has verily portrayed these views in the following lessons from 'Mokshmala': the 12th lesson – 'A Fine Householder'; the 45th lesson – a poem entitled 'Basic Aspirations'; the 55th lesson, also a poem – 'Basic Daily Routine'. In the lessons on – 'Thoughts on Happiness', He has, through His words, drawn a beautiful portrait of the ideals of a sincere religious householder. These writings offer a glimpse into His heart. In His literary works, written between the ages of 16 and 19, He has elaborated upon how to live a married life in a harmonious manner. These writings can be a source of inspiration for all householders.

Shrimad did not allow matrimony to undermine His spiritual aspirations. His renunciation, detachment, ability to remain undisturbed and spiritual quest continued to increase in intensity. During that

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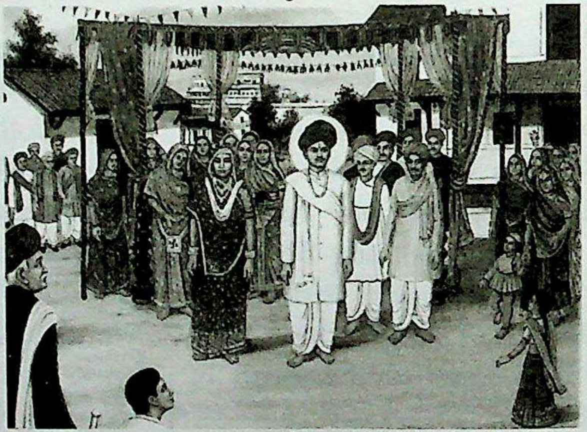

Tying the nuptial knot in Morbi on Maha Sud 12 in V.S. 1944

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time, His spiritual churning reached its peak, as is evident in His letters, which provide an idea of the increasing sense of detachment He was experiencing even in the midst of matrimony. In V.S. 1945, after being married for about a year, He had written 'My Views on Women', in which He states His heartfelt beliefs in a straightforward manner with crystal-clear transparency. Shrimad writes:

'Very, very careful deliberation has proven that infinite happiness lies in absolute knowledge; and there alone lies ultimate samadhi.

Only through a clouded vision is a woman considered to be the ultimate source of happiness in this world; but this is decidedly not so. When viewed with discrimination, the organ which is perceived as the cause of happiness derived from association with a woman, does not appear to be a place fit even for vomiting. Each and every element that creates revulsion can be found in her body; which also remains the place of its origin. Besides, that pleasure is momentary, remorseful and like the disease of eczema. The scene of that moment is etched in the heart and makes one laugh, as to how one is beguiled? In a nutshell, what is to be said is that there is no happiness there; and if there is happiness, describe what happens if it (the act) continues – it will become apparent that it

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is a belief nurtured only by a state of delusion. Here, I am not making judgements about the various parts of a woman's body, but simply mentioning that my discriminatory capabilities have developed such that the soul will never be attracted there. The fault is not in woman; the fault lies with the soul. Once that fault is eradicated, what the soul sees is wonderful, blissful. Thus, the way to overcome that fault, that alone is the paramount quest.

Once there is complete abidance in the Self, the previously accrued karmas of delusion can be reduced to ashes at every subsequent moment. These words come from my experience.

But as long as previously accrued karmas continue to manifest in Me, how can I attain solace? Upon contemplation, I came to the following solution:

A woman should be taught right conduct. She should be considered an aspirant. One should maintain the relation of a spiritual sister with her. From the depth of the heart, one should not, in any way, discriminate between a mother, a sister and her. A part of her body is enjoyed in one way or another, when one is under the spell of delusion. During such times, one should remember only the connection with one's soul

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and forget about 'how much pleasure I can experience because she is there.' (That is to say – it is false to think thus.) Just as two friends share ordinary things with each other, share this relationship with remorse and free yourself from past bondage. As far as possible, speak with her in a language that is free from lust. Even as the body physically experiences passions, your focus must be targeted on the Self.

If the act results in childbirth, consider it as an ordinary event and do not get attached. Instead, reflect upon the fact that the place from where excretion occurs is the same place through which this matter (child) is born, so why get enticed by it again? Having just emerged from the prison of dense darkness, one wants to befriend the same thing again! What is this strangeness? The desire should be that the union does not result in any joy or sorrow, that there should be no childbirth resulting from it. Let me not refresh my memory of that scene. Oh! Soul, under no circumstance should you forget how much bondage a beautiful face and beautiful complexion (of inert matter) can create.'[1]

Besides this, in several other articulations, one can clearly see Shrimad's extreme dispassion. Though

1- 'Shrimad Rajchandra', 6th edition, pages 195-196 (Aank-78)

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the world appeared distressing to Him, Shrimad could not free Himself from the bondage created from His past karmas. He could not spiritually progress as rapidly as He had expected and this situation grieved Him so deeply that in one letter, He considered Himself to be foremost amongst all the suffering people in the world. For Him, it was extremely difficult to live even for a moment without attaining an appropriate state of dispassion.

Shrimad was supremely detached even when it came to worldly relations – He was not attracted towards women and had absolutely no desire for sensual pleasures. He accepted whatever life meted out without getting bound in the slightest, with complete detachment. He believed that staying with the family was like staying in a black dungeon, increasing one's worldliness. It was like living in the home of a mountain-like delusion. Even one hundredth of the annihilation of worldliness, that can be attained by living in solitude, cannot be attained by living amidst family ties. However, finding no other solution, He accepted the life of a householder with forbearance, remaining unaffected like a lotus in water. Outwardly, He fulfilled His duties as a householder. Inwardly, He constantly nurtured His wish for renunciation.

In one letter, Shrimad evaluated His life as a householder, as neither dissatisfactory nor befittingly

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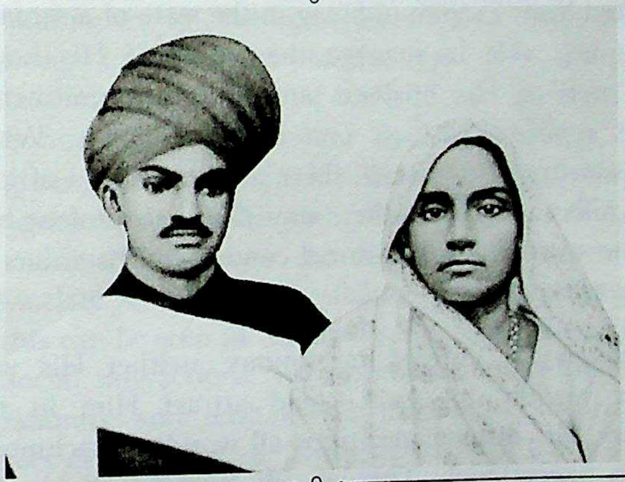

Shrimad and His wife Jhabakbai

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satisfying. He wrote that owing to His state of detachment, it was average. His conduct with respect to His wife and family was in accordance to that which was ordained by destiny, nothing more. Thus, outwardly He lived the life of a householder, but inwardly He lived as a detached renunciate, a soul-focused saint. This can be easily gauged by impartially assessing His writings. Shrimad was once asked how, in spite of being in the state of a sanyasi, He was able to manage the affairs of His house as well as His business and social commitments. He replied, "Just as one uses the toilet. When answering nature's call, there are no feelings of love or affection, nor is there any desire to prolong the time spent there." Shrimad conducted His affairs in the same manner.

Though He entered matrimony, neither His wife nor worldly pleasures could attract Him in the least. His dispassion amidst all worldly attachments was exceptional. Through all worldly affairs, He pondered upon the soul as continuously as breathing. Even as He bore the responsibilities of a householder, He steadfastly advanced towards His goal. In spite of His being unable to adopt external renunciation due to His past karmas, His heart truly yearned for complete asceticism. This craving remained all throughout, only to grow in intensity over time. In the midst of worldly obligations and

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several material causes of sensual gratifications, He conclusively safeguarded His determination for renunciation and dispassion – this only portrays His divine magnificence. His inner state had reached such heights that He was able to accept His destiny with calmness and equanimity.

Thus, Shrimad's life is a definite challenge for those who believe a householder's life to be an encumbrance in the pursuit of the Self. The highway to liberation is external and internal renunciation. However, if that is not possible, a wise and alert householder seeker, pursuing the religious path sincerely, with determined effort, can undoubtedly uplift His soul. Even though one may be a householder, one can follow the ideals of a renunciate as much as possible. A practical example of this can be seen in Shrimad's life. Even in matters of social interactions, He maintained extraordinary equanimity and unshakeable dispassion, setting a perfect example for all. Through His own living and vibrant example, He has conveyed a message that will be an inspiration to other householders.

Despite His desire to the contrary, Shrimad had to live as a householder for nearly a decade. During this time, He was situated in Mumbai for most of the year and would only travel to Vavania about once a year to visit His wife. After spending some time there, He would undertake spiritual retreats in

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the rural areas of Gujarat. He had two sons and two daughters – a total of four children. His first son, Shri Chaganbhai, whom Shrimad often addressed as Chagan Shastri, was born in V.S. 1946. Chagan Shastri suffered a fatal attack of tuberculosis at the age of 19 and passed away the same year, V.S. 1965. Shri Chaganbhai had great respect for his father. Shrimad's first daughter, Javalben, was born in V.S. 1948 and His second daughter, Kashiben, was born two years later in V.S. 1950. She died at the young age of 32. Shrimad's second son, Shri Ratilalbhai, was born in V.S. 1952, but he too died young. Shrimad's wife passed away in V.S. 1969. Javalben passed away in V.S. 2034.

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(8) Business

Even an Enlightened One cannot escape destiny. In accordance with this saying, Shrimad, who was internally detached and dispassionate, had to function within the purview of circumstances meted out by His destiny. Although He was inclined towards pursuing a spiritual goal, He had to venture into business. Around V.S. 1934, the family was undergoing such severe financial crisis that Shrimad's mother, Devabai, had to sell her jewellery and other valuables to protect the family's honour. With limited financial resources and a large family to sustain, Shrimad was duty-bound to help His father and He religiously accepted this responsibility. Thus, at a young age, He had to discontinue His studies and join His father in business. In Vavania, Shrimad followed His grandfather's business of

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overseas trade and moneylending for a while. Even in His youth, due to His maturity and pure intellect, He never cheated in the weighing or pricing of goods. He was virtuous and just, even as a child.

However, Vavania was too small a place to conduct business. There was very little scope for expansion, and therefore Shrimad decided to leave for Mumbai and quite easily found a reason to do so. He was already renowned for His ability to perform avdhans, and one such programme was scheduled in Mumbai. This opportunity to visit Mumbai accorded Him a chance to open avenues for business there. Thus, primarily with financial prospects in mind, Shrimad visited Mumbai around the month of Bhadarva in V.S. 1942.

In Mumbai, upon watching the shatavadhan performance, Shri Maneklal Ghelabhai of Vadodara was drawn to Shrimad and made His acquaintance. Shri Maneklalbhai's father was adept in the valuation of precious stones. Shri Maneklalbhai learnt the art from his father and later joined the jewellery business in Mumbai. In a short time, Shrimad gained the knowledge of valuing precious stones from Shri Maneklalbhai. Thereafter, Shrimad was contemplating joining the jewellery business when in Posh of V.S. 1944, He had to leave for Vavania on account of His marriage. After Shrimad's marriage, Shri Revashankarbhai Jagjivan,

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His father-in-law's brother, became a relative and close associate. Shrimad made an astrological prediction for Shri Revashankarbhai that within a year, he was destined to profit handsomely from the jewellery business. Thus, He inspired Shri Revashankarbhai to leave for Mumbai. Accordingly, Shri Revashankarbhai gave up his profession as a lawyer and left Morbi for Mumbai in the month of Ashadh of V.S. 1945. Shrimad also left for Mumbai the same year, in the month of Bhadarva, and joined Shri Revashankarbhai as his partner in the jewellery business.

Revashankar Jagjivan Co. was established on Fagan Vad 11, V.S. 1946. The firm started off as a commission agency, and Shrimad, Shri Revashankarbhai and Shri Maneklalbhai ran the firm together, as partners. By Shrimad's good fortune, the company became renowned in a very short time. Within two years, they had formed alliances with businessmen in Rangoon, Arabia, England and other countries in Europe. From V.S. 1948, a jeweller from Surat, Shri Naginchand Kapurchand and another from Ahmedabad, Shri Chhotalal Lallubhai, also joined the company. Each partner took charge of some aspect of the business. Accounts and foreign trade were handled by Shrimad. Even then, He was the overall in charge and the final authority in the firm. His managerial skills had put their firm at par with

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India's top-notch firms in a very short time. The firm also netted huge profits.

After V.S. 1951, Shrimad's younger brother, Shri Mansukhbhai, joined the firm and in Jeth of V.S. 1952, Shrimad expressed His desire to retire from business. However, Shri Revashankarbhai and Shri Mansukhbhai did not consent to this, so Shrimad stayed on, but only as an advisor. Besides jewellery, the firm also dealt in cloth and rice, among other things. In V.S. 1955, they conducted their rice business on a large scale, for which Shrimad had to put in considerable effort. By the end of V.S. 1955, a dispassionate Shrimad completely retired from business and willed His entire assets to His younger brother, Shri Mansukhbhai.

Shrimad was a disciplined, honest and accomplished businessman. As a result of His astuteness, there was affability and unity amongst all the partners – they did not experience any discord or difference of opinion. In His memoir in Ashadh of V.S. 1946, He established a code of conduct outlining business ethics towards His partners. Upon reading that memoir, one can get an idea of how pure, practical and just His thoughts were:

'1. Do not see faults in others. Whatever happens is happening due to your faults – think thus.

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Age 24 Shrimad Rajchandra V.S. 1948

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2. Do not praise yourself; if you do, it is you who are ignoble. That is what I believe.

3. Strive to behave in a way that is pleasing to others. You will not succeed right away, or you may even face obstacles. Even so, slowly and steadily, with determination, sincerely aspire to reach this state.

4. Inform those with whom you have social alliances exactly how you have decided to interact with them. If they are comfortable with that, go ahead, or else conduct yourself the way they prefer. Also inform them that I will not let you incur any loss (in what is assigned to me) due to lack of sincerity on my part. Do not make assumptions regarding me. I have no ulterior motives in my behaviour, and I have no desire to act in such a way with you. Not only that, if my behaviour is ever against your wishes – be it in thought, word or deed – I will regret it. From the beginning, I will be careful that this does not happen. I will remain humble while performing the assigned task, and even if reproached for my mistakes, I will take it in my stride. As far as possible, I will not bear a grudge against you, even in my dreams or imagine otherwise about you. If you have any doubts, please approach me, I will be grateful and explain the right reason. If I am

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unable to clarify, I will remain silent, but I will never speak a lie. I desire just one thing of you: that you will not make me instrumental in committing any wrongdoing; you may conduct yourself as you deem fit, I need not elaborate upon that further. Do not feel offended while allowing me to practise solitude. And if you do feel so, definitely let me know immediately. My wish is to walk on that path and I will find an appropriate way to do so. As far as I can, I will not make you unhappy. Even if you experience displeasure about my solitude, as far as possible, I will be careful not to harm you and act in a way that is beneficial; maintaining the wish to pursue it in the future, I will move away.'[1]

Shrimad's approach to conducting business was so impeccable that it was also lauded by many foreign merchants. This approach was: buy the goods only after personal inspection; maintain a uniform selling price; keep reasonable profit margins; do not hurt anyone's sentiments; never renege on a promise, even if it means forgoing profits; and keep transparent and meticulous accounts, to name a few. Constantly maintaining a high moral standard, He established Himself as an honest and principled

1- 'Shrimad Rajchandra', 6th edition, pages 235-236 (Aank-175, 13)

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businessman. Many incidences have been noted of His largesse in business.

There was once an Arab broker in Mumbai who, along with his younger brother, ran a pearl agency. Once, the younger brother felt like dealing with large business transactions in pearls, like his elder brother. Through a middleman, he enquired about an honest businessman and he was introduced to Shrimad, who examined the merchandise and bought it at a reasonable rate. The younger brother returned home with the money, pleased with himself and told his elder brother about the transaction. The elder brother showed him the owner's letter, which specifically stated not to make a deal for less than a certain amount and pointed out that the amount quoted was much larger than the deal he had made with Shrimad. Frustrated, the elder brother admonished him, saying, "What have you done?" This scared him. He went back to Shrimad and explained his predicament. Shrimad pointed to his merchandise, which was lying on the side, untouched, and said, "Sir, here it is. You may gladly take it back." Shrimad returned the goods and accepted His money back. He let go of His profit with such ease, as if no transaction had ever transpired. He did not pay heed to the enormous gain. As per business ethics, once a deal is sealed, a merchant has no right over the sold goods, but

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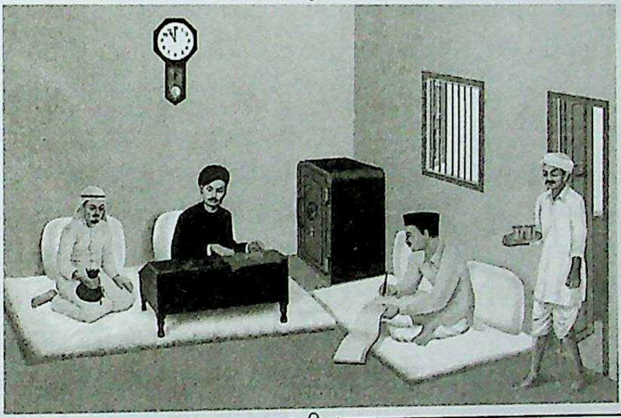

Shrimad's large heartedness and extraordinary compassion towards the Arab

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soft-hearted Shrimad never willed anyone harm. The Arab was spellbound by Shrimad's compassion and extraordinary greatness and looked up to Him as God.

A similar incident also provides a glowing example of Shrimad's compassion and detachment. A diamond merchant once signed an agreement with Shrimad in which it was decided that at a stipulated time, the merchant would give a certain amount of diamonds to Shrimad, as per the value they had agreed upon. But in time, the value of the diamonds rose steeply. If the merchant were to abide by the pact, he would incur a loss that he would be unable to absorb. If he supplied the diamonds according to their agreement, he would be neck deep in debt and to overcome that, he would have to sell all his assets. When Shrimad became aware of the market price of the diamonds, He immediately took the agreement papers and went to the merchant's office. On seeing Shrimad in his office, the merchant went pale. At once he pleaded, "Raichandbhai, I am very worried about the diamond agreement between us. Whatever happens to me, believe me, I will fulfil the deal at the market price. Please do not worry at all." Upon hearing this, the compassionate Shrimad gently asked, "Is not this paper the main cause of concern for both of us? Destroying it will put an end to all our worries." So saying, He simply tore

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the agreement and said, "My dear sir, it was this agreement that had bound you. With the increase in market price, you would have owed me 60-70 thousand rupees. But I understand your plight. What would become of you if I were to demand that kind of money from you? Raichand can drink milk, not blood." Overwhelmed with gratitude at this approach, the merchant stared stupefied at the angelic Shrimad. These two incidences show that Shrimad never intended to ruin another; He would rather forgo His own profit to salvage the other person's plight.

Thus, Shrimad was a fine confluence between practical wisdom and religious adherence. His everyday interactions were woven with transparent honesty and intrinsic morality. Dharma was reflected in every task He undertook. For such a person, who was both socially and spiritually adept, Mahatma Gandhi writes:

'A religious person's religion should reflect in all his activities. Raichandbhai exemplified this belief through His life. That religion should be followed only on ekadashi, or during Paryushan, or on the day of Id, or Sunday, or perhaps in temples, churches or mosques – but not in the shop or royal court – there is no such law. Not just that, to say so implies that one has not

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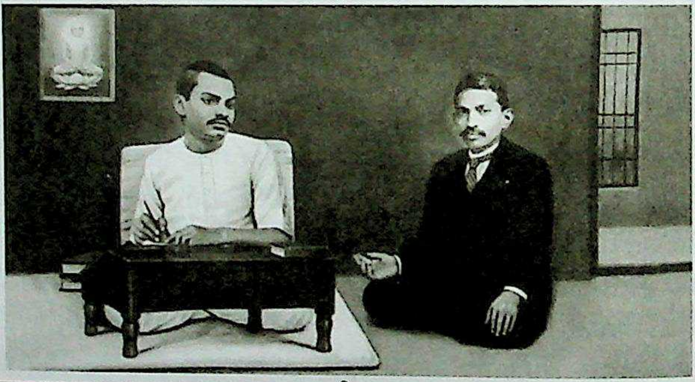

Religious discussions between Shrimad and Gandhiji at Revashankar Jagjivan's firm in Mumbai

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understood religion. This is what Raichandbhai used to say, believe and show by His conduct...

The notion, that one who is immersed in religion cannot be adept in social affairs, was proved wrong by Raichandbhai. He displayed keen solicitousness and competence in business. He could examine diamonds and pearls with great precision...

But with all His acumen and keenness, He was never worried or impatient in business. He would sit in His shop, but as soon as His work was accomplished, there would always be a religious book next to Him that He would open, or that diary in which He jotted down His thoughts. Curious souls like me would invariably visit Him daily. He would never hesitate to discuss religion with them.'[1]

In spite of His extraordinary acumen in business, internally He was totally detached from it. In spite of fulfilling all His professional obligations and successfully completing all assignments, it was only the light of divinity that illumined His heart.

Once in Mumbai, at 11 in the night, when spiritual discussions were coming to an end, Shrimad got

1- Edited by Shri Gopaldasbhai Jivabhai Patel, from 'Shri Rajchandra (Jivanyatra and Vicharratno)', 2nd edition, Raichandbhaina ketlak smarano, pages 96-97

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up with all the others to leave the shop and head home. Just then, Shri Nanchandbhai of Pune noticed an open chest containing a large amount of diamonds, rubies, pearls and other precious items. He drew Shrimad's attention to it, saying, "Dear Sir, this chest is open. There is danger in it." Shrimad made everyone sit down again and asked Shri Nanchandbhai, "How is there danger?" Shri Nanchandbhai replied, "Sir, I equate valuables with danger. A loss will be incurred if they are stolen." To this, Shrimad stated, "Even the Enlightened Ones see them as dangerous, but in this way: so long as they are there, there is danger. When a person is afflicted (wounded), he oozes pus. Likewise, these objects are disorders of the earth. The Enlightened Ones are never attracted to them."

Another similar incident has also been chronicled. Shri Lalluji Muni and Shri Devkaranji Muni once visited Shrimad. Shrimad asked Shri Devkaranji Muni, "Who gives the discourse? How many people attend it?" Shri Devkaranji Muni replied, "About a thousand people assemble for it." Shrimad asked, "Are you affected by sensual thoughts upon seeing the assembled women?" Shri Devkaranji Muni admitted, "Not physically, but mentally, yes." Then Shrimad expounded, "A monk has to be careful in mind, body and speech – in all three." Shri Devkaranji Muni accused, "You sit on a mattress

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with bolsters, surrounded by jewels. At such times, does Your mind not get tainted?" Shrimad stated, "Muni, I perceive them as deadly poison."

Thus, Shrimad conducted His worldly affairs in a completely non-attached manner. He conducted business worth thousands, yet, illumined by the light of knowledge ignited by His soul-awareness, He remained introspective. His pursuit of liberation continued unabated.

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(9) Attainment of Self-Realisation

Faith with conviction in the words of a Sadguru and devotedly following Him without asserting one's will, enables one to progress on the path towards enlightenment. By repeatedly musing upon the Soul and focusing within, at some blessed moment, one experiences the Soul. To have faith in the Sadguru, and through Him, to have faith in the Pure Soul – this is termed vyavhar samyagdarshan or vyavhar samkit. Faith resulting from transcending the mind and experiencing the soul is called nishchay samyagdarshan or nishchay samkit. Since vyavhar samkit is always present before nishchay samkit is attained, it has been regarded as the cause of nishchay samkit. Without self-experience, shuddh samkit or nishchay samkit is never possible.

In the true sense, religion begins with samyagdarshan

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or right belief. It has been clearly elucidated in the scriptures that the transmigration of the soul cannot stop without attaining samyagdarshan. It is a principle that the one who has attained samyagdarshan – right belief, even for a moment, will most certainly be liberated. Samyagdarshan is the first step towards reaching the abode of the Siddhas – the Emancipated Souls. It is the gateway to liberation; the firm roots of the tree of dharma; the great wind that blows away the amassed dust of karmas; the inferno that burns the forest of worldly existence. The infinitely blessed one who attains this difficult to obtain samyagdarshan reaches the end of his worldly sojourn and experiences the bliss of the Soul. In Shrimad's life, this unprecedented event which played the most pivotal role, the attainment of shuddh samkit, took place in V.S. 1947.

Shrimad's heart found no solace other than in the Self. What contributed to this single-minded love of the Self? It was His passion for leading a life of high ideals right from childhood, knowledge of His previous lives, His profound study of the scriptures, His ever-increasing detachment, His constant remembrance of the Truth alone, His fervent desire to experience the Self, His constant effort to augment His own virtues and His deep reflection on fundamental elements learnt from the scriptures, carried out by a calm and introspective

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mind. Shrimad's detachment from all worldly attractions, dispassion in worldly affairs and proclivity towards the Self kindled within Him an unbounded passion for self-realisation. All that mattered to Shrimad was when His entire focus would converge within and He would attain shuddh samkit. His endeavour was to reflect deeply upon His Pure Consciousness and thereby attain self-realisation. His repeated churning on the soul made Him go deeper and deeper within. In a letter written to Shri Saubhagyabhai in V.S. 1946, He writes:

'Night and day, there is just one subject, liberation, which plays on the mind; that is my food, that is my sleep, that is my rest, that is my dream, that is my fear, that is my enjoyment, that is my possession, that is my movement, that is my posture – what more can be said? My bone, flesh and its marrow are coloured by that one colour alone.'[1]

By V.S. 1946, coloured in divinity, Shrimad's focus became so strongly centred on spirituality that He was completely established in the Self and His life was constantly moving towards absolute abidance in the Soul.

Day in and day out, He ardently longed for the

1- 'Shrimad Rajchandra', 6th edition, page 224 (Patrank-133)

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experience of the Self. Inwardly, He longed for tranquillity of the Soul. He was totally exhausted by the discord brought about by passions. His dispassionate heart was seeking the Divinity, which lay beyond worldly and bodily pleasures. Beyond all feelings of the non-self, it fervently waited to enter the haven of the Self. Abandoning all other desires, His heart was longing for the great treasures of the Self. With this frame of mind, Shrimad turned solely towards the Self, and as a result of continual and alert soul-searching, attained shuddh samyag-darshan – self-realisation, in V.S. 1947.

By persistent contemplation on the significance of the soul and ultimately by the sheer dint of enormous personal effort, Shrimad's focus turned inwards, severed the knot of delusion, transcended the mind, and with great joy, experienced the Self through direct knowledge beyond the senses. In the stillness of the experience, the dualities of aspirant and goal, meditator and subject of meditation, knower and the known – all simply dissipated. His entire existence was now a matter of His direct experience. His focus separated itself from even the most subtle thoughts and dissolved in the Self, beyond the senses. In this thoughtless state of Soul experience, unprecedented bliss and the sweet nectar of tranquillity was experienced. There is a clear mention of this self-realisation in a

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letter written by Shrimad from Mumbai to His soulmate, Shri Saubhagyabhai, on Kartik Sud 14 of V.S. 1947:

'That the soul has attained knowledge – this is beyond doubt. The knot has been severed. This is an eternal fact.'[1]

In the same year, in a letter written on Magsar Vad Amas, He writes:

'There is not even the slightest lack in understanding and experiencing the ultimate state of the Self. Absolute knowledge of the entire universe will manifest... Absolute knowledge of the Self has already manifested;'[2]

In a letter to Shri Ambalalbhai in the month of Bhadarva of V.S. 1952, Shrimad writes:

'Samyagdarshan (self-realisation) according to Jain philosophy and kevaljnan (Omniscience) according to the Vedanta, has been attained by me.'[3]

Again, a mention of Shrimad's divine state can be found in His autobiographical poem:

1- 'Shrimad Rajchandra', 6th edition, page 249 (Patrank-170)
2- Ibid., page 257 (Patrank-187)
3- Ibid., page 517 (Patrank-708)

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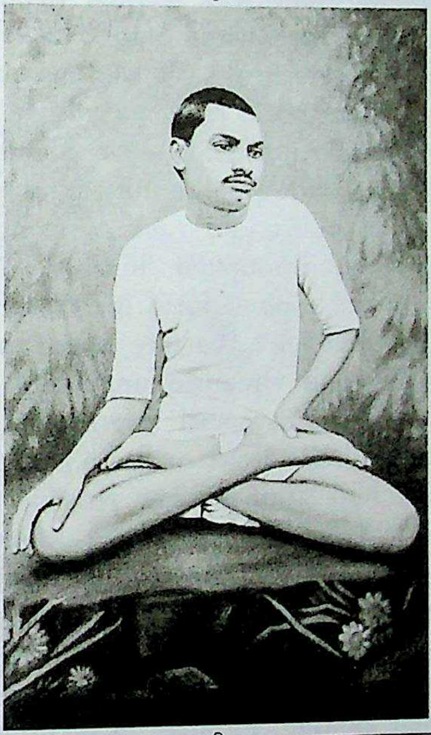

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'Attained shuddh samkit in nineteen hundred and forty-seven.'[1]

After the attainment of self-realisation, Shrimad passionately directed Himself towards the attainment of the Supreme State with spirited vigour. Having experienced the Pure Blissful State once, He aspired to experience it repeatedly. To continuously remain immersed in that state, Shrimad wished to adopt complete renunciation and move about without any restrictions. However, destiny intervened in a big way; social obligations took a stronghold and His worldly duties multiplied. Shrimad had become non-attached and aspired for a life of solitude, yet He dutifully fulfilled whatever social obligations came His way and remained unaffected by it all. After V.S. 1952, His social responsibilities ebbed considerably and His desire to attain internal as well as external renunciation became possible to a large extent. Every year, He would leave Mumbai for a period of four to six months and retire into a quiet place for spiritual pursuits. As a result, He 'attained a state very close to Omniscience.' Thus, after attaining self-realisation, consistently augmenting His spiritual power, Shrimad incessantly pursued the path of liberation till the end (V.S. 1957). This period of spiritual advancement in Shrimad's life can be divided into two parts according to His

1- 'Shrimad Rajchandra', 6th edition, page 801 (Haathnodh-1, 32)

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external circumstances:

(1) First part – from V.S. 1947 (attainment of self-realisation) to V.S. 1951

(2) Second part – from V.S. 1952 to V.S. 1957 (till His passing away)

We shall glean through the first part of Shrimad's spiritual advancement under the heading, 'Samadhi Amidst Worldly Affairs' (Chapter 10), and the second part under the heading, 'Intense Sadhana During Spiritual Retreats' (Chapter 11).

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(10) Samadhi Amidst Worldly Affairs

The life of Enlightened Beings is distinctly partitioned between the external and the internal. The external is predestined, dependent and transient, thus it is different for each one. While hidden in different external guises, the internal is ever-independent and unchanging, hence it remains the same. Because of Their enlightened state, Enlightened Beings are perpetually abiding in the Self. Despite this, even They cannot escape the throes of destiny. It is not necessary that an Enlightened Being's destiny only holds renunciation, it may contain worldly activities too. At all times, no matter what preordained karmas manifest, They conduct themselves as a witness in all situations. Such is an Enlightened One's eternal conduct, and this is the exact practice that one observes in Shrimad's life.

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Between V.S. 1947 and V.S. 1951, Shrimad endured severely trying circumstances. As a result of past karmas, He was burdened with strong business commitments. To fulfil these obligations, He had to focus externally and this posed an obstacle to constant abidance in the soul. Yet, by maintaining self-awareness in the midst of several business commitments, Shrimad could remain in a continual state of samadhi. Despite being burdened with many social and business involvements and living in a materialistic city like Mumbai, with the inner strength of constant self-pursuit, one can certainly progress spiritually. This invaluable lesson is learned by examining this significant phase in Shrimad's life. His letters and other writings of the time clearly reveal His internal state.

In V.S. 1947, Shrimad attained shuddh samkit, knowing the soul through direct self-experience. He attained a transcendental, undisputed experience of the soul as separate from the body. His focus shifted from body-consciousness and abided in the Self. Along with self-realisation came a divine experience of infinite bliss – the soul was immersed in an ocean of ecstasy. Within, there was a wondrous, unprecedented and inconceivably peaceful experience of the divinity of the soul. There was a constant awareness of the separation between the Self from the non-self. He was continually

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experiencing oneness with Pure Consciousness. Aware of the soul as separate from the trinity of mind, body and speech – and abiding in that Pure Soul – Shrimad was actually experiencing the state of liberation transcending the body while still embodied. Describing this state, He writes to His soulmate Shri Saubhagyabhai that very year (V.S. 1947), in the month of Ashadh, from Mumbai –

'Except for the Eternal Being, and His wealth of love, I like nothing else; I do not have the slightest interest in anything else; there is no desire to attain anything; there is no attention on ongoing worldly activities, no recollection of the state of the world; there is no longer any differentiation between friend and foe – I cannot keep track of who is a friend and who a foe; whether I am embodied or not is something I barely remember on recollection.'[1]

While conducting worldly activities, the extent of Shrimad's detachment can be clearly discerned from the above statements. In this state, Shrimad transcended body consciousness and would even forget whether or not His body existed at all. From this, one can somewhat fathom Shrimad's divine exhilaration.

Thus, from V.S. 1947, the time He attained self-

1- 'Shrimad Rajchandra', 6th edition, page 290 (Patrank-255)

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realisation, Shrimad's abidance in the Self was speedily and progressively increasing. Inwardly, as His state of dispassion increased, His desire to renounce the world and become free from all inner and outer ties began to intensify. Meanwhile, externally, His predestined karmas took on a new form. As His Soul attained higher levels, His social and business obligations increased too. The more He tried to free Himself from them, the more they increased, not abating in the least. Shrimad has alluded to this in the following verse, taken from His autobiographical composition:

'Then came the dreadful intervention of karmas, resulting in the expansion of business activities and possessions;

The more I tried to push it away, the more it increased, not abating in the least.'[1]

As mentioned earlier, due to familial situations, Shrimad was obliged to become involved in business. Shrimad Himself had inspired Shri Revashankarbhai to get involved in business and later joined him as a partner. Together, they established a commission agency in the name of Revashankar Jagjivan. At the time, Shrimad's intention was that He would soon retire from the firm, renounce everything and

1- 'Shrimad Rajchandra', 6th edition, page 801 (Haathnondh-1, 32)

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promote the path of liberation. Instead, in V.S. 1948, His responsibilities intensified. That year, the firm increased its business dealings, eating up the better part of His time. In His letters written that year, one finds repeated mention of the extent of His business involvement. If one were to see it from a practical standpoint, His difficulties were not so arduous that He suffered any hardships because of them. Also, it was not as if the onus of this responsibility was in any way distressing to His soul. Even amidst all His worldly dealings, He was certainly safeguarding His internal state – His only point of contention was that He was unable to completely renounce the world as He had desired, and that alone was the greatest obstacle. Thus, His only real difficultly was that the more He wished for complete renunciation, the further it evaded Him. That He had to conduct Himself against this will was His greatest burden. He writes:

'There are many worldly engagements. The greater the desire for retirement, the greater the advent of worldly engagements. I am surrounded on all sides by these circumstances. I cannot prese-ntly discern a single escape route from where it is possible to leave without offending anyone. In attempting to become free, there seems to be a clear possibility of doing wrong to someone, and yet this present state is most conducive

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for deliverance from mundane activities; but it is destiny, perhaps, that has ordained this arrangement.'[1]

Through the above writing, one can surmise that Shrimad's business activities and worldly affairs were conducted most unwillingly, solely directed by destiny and primarily to appease others. Even though He nurtured a desire to free Himself promptly, He withheld because of the severe distress it would cause those who were associated with Him and the resulting bondage of karmas it would cause them. To hurt or cause distress to another was simply unacceptable to the kind-hearted Shrimad. Therefore, to adopt such behaviour that would ensure peace within all, He had to go through worldly engagements, which He did with equanimity. During this phase of duality, in which outwardly He was a householder while inwardly He remained a renunciate, Shrimad had to curtail His desire to illumine the path of divinity. Even amongst His acquaintances, He preferred to remain reticent about it. He writes:

'For the most part, it seems that so long as there is involvement in business, till then, it is appropriate not to be recognised when

1- 'Shrimad Rajchandra', 6th edition, page 369 (Patrank-439)

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dharma is being discussed etc. and as one who knows dharma. In spite of being involved in business, the one who remains in a devotional state should act in such a manner that the aforementioned state of the soul is not disturbed in any way.'[1]

On one hand, enduring the unbearable suffering caused by destiny, while on the other hand maintaining a state of unbroken samadhi proved more difficult than walking on a double-edged sword. Such was the trying task that Shrimad had to perform. This is why, for want of time, He cut short all social obligations except for those which were essential. Not only that, He also reduced the exchange of letters with spiritual aspirants. Many times, He would start a letter, but then He would become so absorbed in the Self that He would leave it incomplete. Thus, His intense worldly obligations coupled with His state of Pure Consciousness did not accord Shrimad enough stability even for spiritual writing. Therefore, from V.S. 1948 to V.S. 1951, Shrimad observed virtual silence, curtailing all spiritual writing and discussions. In a letter written in V.S. 1948 on Posh Sud 7, Shrimad writes:

'Such is the fated circumstance that in spite of

1- 'Shrimad Rajchandra', 6th edition, page 380 (Patrank-463)

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being in a state of unprecedented dispassion, some business related activities can still be performed. Likewise, other tasks such as eating, drinking and so on can just barely be managed. The mind does not settle anywhere and mostly does not wish to be associated with anyone here. I am unable to write anything. There is no desire to utter any more spiritual expressions; in spite of knowing the answer to someone's queries, I am unable to pen an answer. There is little association even with the mind; the soul exists in its own natural state of being.'[1]

Shrimad was so immersed in the deep ocean of consciousness that He found it extremely difficult to emerge from it. Therefore, He was desireless and indifferent to all matters apart from the soul. The mind naturally flowed into Pure Consciousness, making it impossible for Him to attend to anything else. During business transactions, this state created many difficulties. Since His mind was focused within, He was unable to function appropriately in daily activities. As a result, external activities were conducted in a disorganised manner, sometimes creating situations in which there was a possibility of someone being distraught about it. His state of oneness with the soul made Him most unsuitable

1- 'Shrimad Rajchandra', 6th edition, page 310 (Patrank-313)

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to engage in worldly affairs, and yet, knowing that to be His destiny, He went through them without getting entangled in them. The extent of the difficulty Shrimad endured while engaging in worldly affairs is expressly described in a letter written to His soulmate, Shri Saubhagyabhai, in the month of Ashadh in V.S. 1948. He writes:

'My mind is like the eyes. Compared to the other parts of the body, the eyes cannot tolerate even one speck of dust in them. The others' minds are like the other parts of the body. The state of My mind is like the eyes, in which it is barely possible to speak, explain, or deliberate on whether to do this or not to do this. Many activities are done mechanically. In spite of such a state, I dedicatedly perform worldly activities that come My way. Experiencing this is no less painful because it is akin to making the eyes pick up sand from the ground nearby. Just as this is difficult because of the pain – the excruciating pain, for the mind, involvement in worldly affairs results in much the same experience. Since the mind easily remains steadfast, it bears the pain with equanimity and remains in a continuous state of samadhi.'[1]

Thus, in spite of an internal state that could not

1- 'Shrimad Rajchandra', 6th edition, page 337 (Patrank-385)

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bear even the slightest worldly involvement, Shrimad bore that situation while maintaining a constant state of samadhi. The worldly associations, however, were so intense that He often considered running away from it all. But adhering to the wisdom of the Enlightened Ones, which advocates acquiescing to the karmas that have been accumulated in the past without causing new karmic bondage or disturbance, He followed that path with equanimity and placated His soul. When there was a fire of worldly circumstances blazing all around Him, He vigilantly safeguarded His soul from being singed by it. He was very aware of the fact that it was an extremely difficult task to abide in the soul amidst all the worldly obligations, and that is why He would be very alert that His worldly affairs would not make Him falter, even the least bit, from His state of samadhi. In spite of these numerous adversities, by the strength of His experience of the Self and detachment, He would ensure that His effort never slackened. He would be very careful that the purity of the soul was maintained and increased. That is why no external circumstance could cause even the slightest impediment in His state of samadhi. Despite His young age of 24-25 years and the fact that He resided in a materialistic city like Mumbai, because of Shrimad's extraordinary soul-awareness, no external influence had the power to disturb His internal state. As gold becomes purified when

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put in fire, Shrimad's role as a householder only intensified His state of detachment.

In His external life, Shrimad conducted business worth lakhs of rupees; but at the same time, His inner life was also blossoming. While living an industrious life, with a calm and collected mind He continued to increase the profundity of His knowledge. He had the potential to renounce worldly obligations and venture off to meditate in remote forests and mountainous terrains. However, keeping the welfare of the soul in mind, exemplifying an extraordinary karmayogi, He stayed in the world like a lotus in a pond, and remained unsullied by it. As a lotus stands untouched even in the midst of the water around it, without attachment of any kind, Shrimad remained completely detached even amidst worldly interactions. Whereas others would be unable to remain dispassionate even in the absence of these entangling situations, Shrimad's dispassion prevailed even while He was engaged in worldly affairs. Similar to King Janaka who remained soul-centred even when obliged to govern a kingdom, and Chakravarti Bharat who maintained a state of equanimity even while overseeing a kingdom spread across the six continents (ancient continents of which the present land mass on earth is only equivalent to the central continent), Shrimad maintained His equipoise through knowledge and detachment in spite of

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His duties as a householder who also conducted business as a jeweller. Thus was Shrimad yoked to the world. Even though, like King Janaka, He was supremely capable of sustaining a state of complete detachment even as a householder, He never, not even in His dreams aspired for worldliness. Not only that, all He ever aspired for was to become free from worldly entanglements at the earliest, so that He could pursue the path of absolute renunciation. On the day of Fagan Vad 3, in V.S. 1951, in a letter written to Shri Saubhagyabhai, Shrimad informs:

'Janaka and others could remain centred in the Self even though they were entangled in the world. This logic has never appealed to me. Even the Dispassionate Lord, who is detached from birth, renounces the world – if this lowly being delays getting out of these dangerous worldly burdens, it would be detrimental for the soul. This is the fear that lurks in the mind, because this alone is my duty.

I constantly think of becoming free, and repeat, like a mantra, the way that this can be accomplished at the earliest. I feel however that these thoughts and the mantras are not yet powerful enough, they are weak. I feel that they should be practised intensely and sincerely very soon.'[1]

1- 'Shrimad Rajchandra', 6th edition, page 452 (Patrank-569)

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Shrimad was performing all social obligations that were meted to Him, with detachment. He was not careless in His worldly dealings, yet He was intensely aware of the goal He had to attain. Shrimad's ideal was not Shri Janakavidehi, but Jineshwar Bhagwan. His constant desire was to sever the bondage of all attachments, to break free from all external and internal ties. However, because of the constricting circumstances that prevailed, this did not happen.

Shrimad could not bear to outwardly attend to business while dwelling in a high spiritual state within, which is why He yearned time and again to break free from the burden of business. Fearing these worldly activities, He continuously endeavoured to retire from them. He considered whatever came to Him as a result of His past karmas as His weakness, and if it continued for long, it would prove hazardous, therefore He wanted to quickly overcome it. This is why He made fervent efforts towards retirement. Clarifying the reason for retirement, Shrimad writes in a letter:

'The state beyond the mind, called nirvikalp samadhi, that I experience is the result of the Soul dwelling in itself. That the Soul almost always remains in a nirvikalp state is very likely because my thoughts primarily are not directed towards anything else.

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In some ways, both wilderness and the home are the same to me. Yet, to dwell in the jungles with the aim of attaining a completely detached state is more appealing; I do not covet happiness, but I do covet non-attachment.'[1]

In this letter, Shrimad clearly emphasises that due to His complete abidance in the Self, His attention towards other thoughts was naturally secondary. As for the Self, it only dwelled in a state beyond the mind. Due to His deep state of inner equanimity, the jungle and the house were the same to Him. That is, in the state of being a knower, all external circumstances simply appeared as the known. Yet, He found the wilderness more conducive to attaining the state of absolute dispassion. He neither desired external comforts nor hardships, all He aspired for was a state of complete dispassion. Thus, He yearned for retirement only to withdraw from all external activities of the mind, body and speech and abide permanently in the Self, remaining in a state of samadhi, transcending the mind. Due to social commitments, He was unable to remain centred in the Self, so He felt a constant yearning to retire. Until the preordained karma abated, He remained in a state of samadhi by being equanimous amidst all social activities. One should deeply reflect

1- 'Shrimad Rajchandra', 6th edition, page 314 (Patrank-322)

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upon the explanation that He has given to Shri Saubhagyabhai as to why He had to engage Himself in worldly affairs even though He aspired intensely to renounce everything. The following excerpt is very useful to understand Shrimad's internal state, which is why it is included here:

'The Enlightened Ones are not obliged to serve the world at the cost of binding their soul, but it can be their destiny. Regardless, the behaviour of the Enlightened Ones is to overcome it. For three years, I have mostly endeavoured in such a manner, and during the time, I have withstood, to the extent of equanimity possible, those circumstances which had the potential to distract the soul. While enduring them, there was always an underlying thought that it would be good if somehow it were possible to renounce everything; yet knowing that if the state one is in during complete renunciation is maintained at present, then many karmas can be shed in a short period, I have tried as far as possible to act accordingly. But now I feel that even if it is not possible to completely distance myself from the entire burden of being a householder, it would be beneficial if I could withdraw, remain away, at least from all business matters, because an aspirant cannot see in the Enlightened Being the state which is required for Him to abide in the Self when

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He is engaged in business transactions.'[1]

Thus, the principle is that an Enlightened Being does not conduct worldly activities with a disposition that binds His soul, but these activities are the result of past karmas. Even an Enlightened One is obliged to fulfil His preordained karmas, and until He has fulfilled them, He does not even wish to be free. But the way an Enlightened One deals with His worldly activities is entirely different from the way an ignorant one does. For an ignorant one, they become the cause of new bondage, thereby further increasing the cycles of life and death. The Enlightened One bears the same without identifying with them, which causes the shedding of karmic bondage. Thus, although an Enlightened Being is engaged in worldly activities with the explicit purpose of becoming free from past karmas; He is vigilant that He does not become attached while performing these activities, and thereby conducts Himself with the sole desire to become free of them.

Starting from around V.S. 1948, for three years, Shrimad bore strong worldly entanglements with equanimity. During the time, He made the same intense effort to nullify His karmas as a renunciate would. As a result, He attained an exalted state. He

1- 'Shrimad Rajchandra', 6th edition, page 448 (Patrank-560)

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had acquired that state of enlightenment necessary for expounding the path, yet He felt a need for outward renunciation, which is why He increasingly desired it. Thus in V.S. 1951, Shrimad commenced His preparations to retire from social and business obligations. By V.S. 1952, His worldly activities ebbed, and He began to receive the solitude He wished for.

Thus, though residing in the world, which can be likened to a soot-filled prison, He kept the flame of samadhi perpetually burning with the oil of strong detachment. This pure flame could not be sullied in the least by the murkiness of the world. If anything, like gold in a fire, His purity increased. What a colossal effort that must have been! Amidst social obligations, He achieved the extraordinary feat of remaining in samadhi – abiding in the Self. Externally, Shrimad lived in the guise of a businessman and householder, yet inwardly He was untouched, uninvolved – spreading the true essence of religion. This indeed was His greatness.

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(11) Intense Sadhana During Spiritual Retreats

From V.S. 1947 to V.S. 1951, Shrimad underwent a phase of intense worldly activities. Despite the obstacles of business activities etc. resulting from past karmas, because of His state of abidance in the Self, He not only remained unaffected by them but deepened His spiritual state. By reviewing the letters He has written during this period, it can be easily ascertained that Shrimad had attained such a dispassionate state that He could fulfil the responsibilities that came His way with a calm and peaceful mind. Shrimad had achieved an extraordinary harmony between social obligations and the inner state of equanimity, meaning, even amidst worldly affairs, He remained firmly rooted in the soul. In V.S. 1952, His social obligations and duties ebbed. As His business commitments decreased, Shrimad found more and more time for spiritual retreats.

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From mid V.S. 1952 till His passing, He would spend the greater part of the year away from Mumbai and immerse Himself in sadhana. Shrimad would return to Mumbai for a while to oversee the business or provide guidance to His younger brother and others. However, He mostly dwelled in the mountains, jungles or the wilderness and remained completely absorbed in the Self. In solitude, He would immerse Himself in scriptural study, contemplation, reflection and meditation. He would resolutely abstain from having food, clothing, domestic obligations and business commitments and voluntarily retreat to areas where exposure to insects, heat and cold, and other hardships was high. Enduring them with equipoise, He strengthened His abidance in the Soul. Thus, in these retreats, Shrimad's life became increasingly like that of an ascetic.

When in retreat, for the most part Shrimad observed silence, and as far as possible remained in seclusion. He rarely corresponded and did not desire to associate with anyone, including other spiritual aspirants. However, despite His persistent efforts to remain unseen, He was frequently recognised and people gathered in large numbers to listen to His teachings. Shrimad would never disappoint them and would fulfil their quest for knowledge. At such retreats, seekers would gain invaluable wisdom from Him, so they never missed these golden opportunities.

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Shrimad's style of imparting knowledge was so unique that people would become mesmerised and would listen to Him for hours on end. The speciality of His discourses was that the listeners' queries were resolved effortlessly without their needing to ask any questions. A part of the teachings He imparted from V.S. 1952 until the time He left His body has been published in the compilation entitled 'Shrimad Rajchandra' under the headings 'Updeshnondh', 'Updeshchhaya', 'Vyakhyansaar' and so forth.

Thus, Shrimad would be away in retreats for at least 4 to 6 months or more in the year, to remain in solitude. A complete account of His solitary sojourns is not available, but some facts have been recorded by aspirants who were associated with Him during those times. From the available information, Shrimad's whereabouts can be chronologically arranged as follows:

After V.S. 1946, Shrimad would mostly be away from Mumbai during Paryushan or Diwali. He would spend a part of this time with His family in Vavania. For the remaining part, He would traverse through the areas of Charotar, Saurashtra, Idar and thereabouts. In V.S. 1947, Shrimad spent Paryushan in the village of Ralaj, near Khambhat. He remained in solitude so as not to be recognised. Immersed in a profound state of self-awareness, Shrimad composed four poems as an expression of His self-experience.

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These include: 'Hey Prabhu! Hey Prabhu! Shu Kahu', 'Yam Niyam', 'Jinvar Kahe Chhe Jnan Tene', and 'Jada Bhave Jada Pariname'. From Ralaj, He proceeded to Khambhat, Vavania, Morbi, Anand and Bharuch before returning to Mumbai on Magsar Sud 6, V.S. 1948. From V.S. 1947 to V.S. 1948, He was away from Mumbai for about three or three and a half months. After that, His social obligations increased. Even though He intensely aspired for retirement, He had to remain in Mumbai between Magsar of V.S. 1948 and Shravan of V.S. 1949. After spending the Paryushan of V.S. 1949 in Vadodara, He proceeded to Petlad, Dharmaj and Khambhat. Between Aso of V.S. 1949 and Maha of V.S. 1951, that is, for almost sixteen months, He had to remain in Mumbai once again. From Maha Sud of V.S. 1951, He was away for a month, travelling to Kathor, Morbi, Vavania and other places before returning to Mumbai. In the same year, from Shravan to Aso, for nearly two months, Shrimad visited Vavania, Morbi, Sayla, Hadamtala, Ranpur, Botad, Limbdi, Vadva, Khambhat, Undel and other places, gracing aspirants with His teachings in each locale. In V.S. 1952, except for a visit to Vavania and Morbi in the month of Vaishakh, He remained in Mumbai till the month of Shravan.

In Shravan of V.S. 1952, Shrimad left Mumbai for nearly two and a half months and headed for Charotar district. In the month of Shravan, He,

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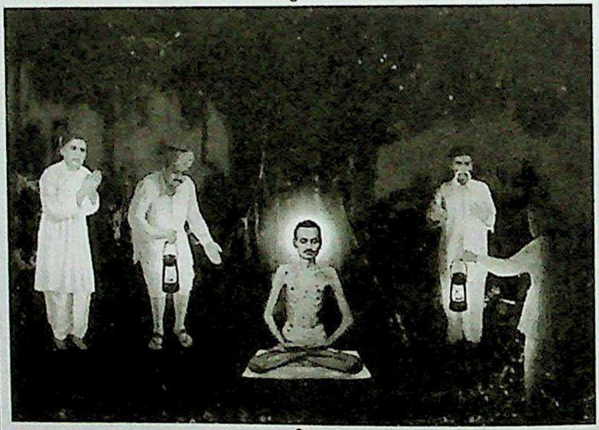

Shrimad immersed in meditation in solitude at night in Kavitha

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along with Shri Ambalalbhai, Shri Saubhagyabhai and Shri Dungarshi Gosalia visited Kavitha, where He stayed in the upper storey of Shri Jhaverchand Sheth's residence. Shri Jhaverchand Sheth had employed a caretaker for Shrimad named Lallubhai, who slept near the staircase. But Shrimad would often leave for the jungle in the dark at 1 or 2 a.m. without informing anyone. When the caretaker would wake up, he would find Shrimad missing. During such instances, Shri Jhaverchand Sheth, Shri Ratanchand, Shri Venichand and others would take lanterns and set out in the middle of the night to search for Him. They would often find Him meditating at Mithuji's well. Shrimad also frequently meditated near the Bhaidva well in the fields under the mowra tree, in Vajigorani's pastureland, near the house of Balanpir and near Ghoda Kothi, and in the fields under mango trees.

From Kavitha, Shrimad proceeded to Ralaj. There, He stayed at the Parsi's bungalow and spent His Paryushan there. During this time, Shri Lalluji Muni and others were in Khambhat for the four months of the monsoons. Restrained by the vows of an ascetic life, they could not travel to Ralaj. But once, Munishri, unable to bear the pangs of separation from Shrimad, ventured till the border of Ralaj. Through Shri Ambalalbhai, he requested permission from Shrimad to enter the village to meet Him. Shrimad

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sent His reply through Shri Ambalalbhai, saying that if Munishri felt dissatisfied, He would personally come to meet him, but if Munishri was at peace, he should depart. Upon hearing this, Muni returned, utterly dejected, bearing the agony of separation, wiping the incessant flow of tears from his eyes.

From Ralaj, Shrimad moved on to Vadva, where Shri Lalluji Muni and the other monks were able to meet Him in seclusion. For six days, they absorbed the divine flow of wisdom directly from Him. After this, Shrimad left Vadva for Khambhat, where He graced the home of Shri Chhotalal Manekchand, a seeker. Whenever Shrimad gave discourses, the house would be filled with eager listeners. From Khambhat, He proceeded to Anand and then to Nadiad in the month of Aso. In Anand, on Aso Sud Ekam, He composed 'Mool Marg Sambhlo Jinno Re.' In Nadiad, on the day after Sharad Purnima, that is on Aso Vad 1, at dusk and in a single sitting, He composed the 142 verses of 'Shri Atmasiddhi Shastra', which contains the philosophical essence of all the scriptures. The seekers of the towns of Kavitha, Ralaj, Vadva and Anand were blessed to be in the presence of an Enlightened Master like Shrimad and to receive the flow of unparalleled, nectar-like teachings from Him. Shri Ambalalbhai, who possessed a remarkable memory, recorded all of the teachings almost verbatim, and these have been

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Composition of Shri Atmasiddhi Shastra in Nadiad on Aso Vad Ekam, V.S. 1952

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published under the heading of 'Updeshchhaya' in the compilation, 'Shrimad Rajchandra'.

Even after Diwali, Shrimad stayed in Nadiad for a while in V.S 1952. Thereafter, He had to leave for Vavania on account of His mother's illness. In Vavania, on waking in the morning, He sat at His mother's bedside and composed the poem, 'Apurva Avsar'. Till Vaishakh of V.S. 1953, He visited Vavania, Morbi, and Sayla. In the same month, together with Shri Saubhagyabhai, He travelled to Idar, where they remained for 10 days. Here, His sermons to Shri Saubhagyabhai resulted in unprecedented benefit to him. During this period, the King of Idar visited Shrimad a couple of times. A detailed account of their conversations was published in the monthly 'Desi Rajya' in 1928 A.D. In it, Shrimad expressed that it appeared that Bhagwan Mahavira, His disciple Gautamswami, and other Gandhars had been in the area. He said that all but one of Bhagwan Mahavira's disciples had attained liberation; the one who was left behind was born in this age, and many souls were likely to benefit from Him. That disciple was none other than Shrimad Himself – He indicated this mysterious secret. Shrimad departed from Idar in the month of Jeth and headed for Mumbai. Thus, from the month of Shravan of V.S. 1952 to Jeth of V.S. 1953, for a period of almost 10 months, Shrimad was away from Mumbai.

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In V.S. 1954, during the three months between Maha and Chaitra, Shrimad resided in Morbi. The sermons given during this time have been noted down by a seeker and are published in 'Shrimad Rajchandra', under the heading 'Vyakhyansaar-1'. From the month of Shravan, Shrimad ventured into uninhabited, secluded jungles where He experienced a supremely ecstatic state of detachment. He practised unprecedented abidance in the Self. He attained a state of continuous self-awareness seldom found in this era and showed remarkable spiritual valour with His intense spiritual practices. Let us chronologically glean through the jungles of Kavitha, Vaso, Uttarsanda, and Kheda, where Shrimad was immersed in deep meditation.

Kavitha – In Shravan, Shrimad departed from Mumbai and headed for Kavitha via Petlad. Besides Shri Ambalalbhai, who was constantly present in His service, Shri Laherabhai, Shri Tribhuvanbhai, Shri Vanmalibhai, Shri Popatlalbhai, Shri Jhaverbhai, Shri Kunwarjibhai and others were blessed to observe Paryushan in Shrimad's presence. Spiritual discussions abounded and Shrimad's wisdom created a divine atmosphere.

Shrimad held discourses everyday in the morning, afternoon and evening and explained certain parts of 'Shri Thanang Sutra', 'Yoga Vasishtha', 'Vicharsagar' and other religious texts. He also spent some time in

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solitude in the fields and forests beyond the village. He walked about with a lowered gaze throughout, reciting verses from the Agams. He would generally walk for about a mile before sitting to meditate under a tree or beside a lake.

Shri Ambalalbhai used to cook for Shrimad during His days in Kavitha. The meal would be simple: daal-rice, chapatti and mashed daal. Sometimes, he would also cook vegetables. Incidentally, Shri Ambalalbhai prepared two vegetable dishes one day. Seeing this, Shrimad commanded Shri Ambalalbhai not to prepare any green vegetables during the remainder of their time in Kavitha. He explained, "I do not eat for taste or for the satisfaction of the senses. I eat, without any attachment, to sustain the body for the benefit of the soul."

Once Shrimad and other aspirants, including Shri Vrajbhai Gangadas Patel and Shri Laherabhai, visited Vagadia lake in Kavitha. The landlord, Shri Shamalbhai, brought some jasmine flowers from his farm nearby and arranged them on Shrimad's seat. Seeing this, Shrimad explained that so many flowers should not be plucked for such a trivial reason and specifically mentioned that his daughter, Heera, would recover by the following day. Interestingly, Shrimad had not previously met either Shri Shamalbhai or Heera. She lived in Sihol, about 12 miles from Kavitha, and had been ill for several

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days, but by the time Shri Shamalbhai went to visit her, she had already recovered.

Another time, when Shrimad was seated under a banyan tree in Dharaniya, discussing spiritual matters with seekers, a notorious bandit named Babardeva was passing by. Everyone was frightened, but Shrimad asked them not to be. He called out to Babardeva, inviting him to sit in front of Him. Babardeva prostrated himself and beseeched Shrimad to counsel him. Shrimad advised, "Consider all women as your mother, sister or daughter and refrain from plunder and theft." Babardeva followed this counsel and spent the rest of his life serving humanity.

Vaso – In the month of Bhadarva, Shrimad left Kavitha for Vaso. On Shri Lalluji Muni's request, He stayed in Vaso for one whole month. At the time, together with Shri Lalluji Muni, Munishri Mohanlalji and Munishri Chaturlalji were also stationed there on account of the four months of monsoon. When Shri Lalluji Muni went to the villagers to seek alms, he would proclaim to everyone, "A great saint has come from Mumbai! He is very learned, and you will benefit greatly if you listen to His discourses!" Hearing this, many people started coming for the discourses. Therefore, Shrimad told Shri Lalluji Muni, "You monks should not come when laypeople congregate." Shri Lalluji Muni deeply regretted this – though he had requested a month-long

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association with Shrimad, his proclamations became an impediment. The monks and other sincere followers were able to receive Shrimad's divine wisdom only when He went into the jungles.

One day, Shrimad and a group of seekers went to a pasture located a mile away from Vaso. Here, He instructed Shri Dhoribhai to sing the hymn, 'Bharateshwar Bhupati Bhayo Vairagi' three times. He also had Shri Mallinath Bhagwan's composition from 'Shri Anandghan Chovisi' sung repeatedly. When sung in Shrimad's presence, these compositions which augmented dispassion, pervaded the entire surroundings with detachment. After the recitation of the composition, Shrimad elucidated upon the greatness of Jain philosophy and the need for a Sadguru.

The next day, Shrimad was sitting under a rayan tree with the monks when a gardener passed by, carrying flowers. Overwhelmed by love for Shrimad, the gardener offered them to Him. Shrimad then explained topics like offering flowers to the Lord, idol worship and Jinkalpi and Sthavirkalpi monks.

On the third day, they went to the same pasture. Spending the afternoon sitting beneath the same rayan tree, Shrimad asked Shri Dhoribhai to sing Shri Mallinath Bhagwan's hymn, written by Shri Anandghanji Maharaj, eight times. Then, He asked Shri Dhoribhai to explain the hymn. Thereafter,

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Shrimad explained its deeper spiritual meaning. After this, blissfully chanting the couplet 'Raagishun raagi sahu re, vairagi shyo raag; manrawala; raag vina kim dakhvo re, mukti sundari maag? Manrawala.' Singing the line, 'Jeno kaal te kinkar thayi rahyo' in a loud and enchanting voice, He moved towards the village and continued to sing till they reached the house.

One day, near the large stepwell, Shrimad preached to the monks about soul-awareness. He also suggested that Shri Lalluji Muni learn Sanskrit. Then, He went in solitude to an ancient Mahadeva temple in the jungle. There, sitting in a lotus pose, wearing just one loin cloth, Shrimad gave a sermon on the meaning of the words: 'Sijjhanti bujjhanti mucchanti parinivvayanti savvadukhanamantam karanti'. Once, He guided Shri Mohanlalji Muni regarding giving discourses, steadying the mind and meditating.

One day, eight to ten pundits, officers and others came to discuss the scriptures. They started their discussion in Sanskrit. Five minutes later, they shifted to Gujarati. This went on for another five minutes, after which Shrimad commenced His preaching on how to attain spiritual upliftment. This sermon lasted for two hours, and the pundits and others in the audience received their solutions from that itself. They joyously bowed down and

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took His leave.

At the end of the month, Shrimad instructed the monks to give up their inadvertence and lack of passion on the path of liberation. He cautioned them to remain aware, saying, "Oh monks, right now, in the presence of an Enlightened Being, you show a lack of passion, but you will repent when the Enlightened One is no longer around. Even if you travel hundreds of miles, you will not come across an Enlightened One." Shrimad also guided Shri Lalluji Muni regarding the spiritual practices to be given to seekers for their spiritual upliftment. On the last day, Shrimad counselled Shri Lalluji Muni for an hour, turning his focus from love for His physical form to his own soul.

Thus, every day, the jungle was brimming with the spirit of satsang and billowing with devotion. Ripples of knowledge flowed freely and joy pervaded all around. On one occasion, the sermon continued for the whole night, from nine at night to five in the morning. When the sermons ended, Shrimad would often walk away into the wilderness and immerse Himself in scriptural studies and meditation. The forest would reverberate with well-known chants. Whilst in the jungles of Vaso, He sought a state of constant, uninterrupted soul abidance and remembered the extraordinary alertness of the Dispassionate Ones as a means to intensify His

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own efforts towards attaining that state. Thus, after gracing Vaso with His presence for an entire month, attaining a state of constant Soul abidance, drenching everyone in divinity, and blessing the seekers with spiritual benefit, Shrimad departed for the jungles of Uttarsanda.

Uttarsanda – Through Shri Motilal Bhavsar, Shrimad enquired about a solitary place near Nadiad which would be suitable for stay. As instructed, two miles from Nadiad, in an isolated spot in the jungles of Uttarsanda, Shri Motilalbhai found a small bungalow, adjacent to a pond and surrounded by a garden. There, Shrimad arrived along with Shri Ambalalbhai, Shri Laherabhai and Shri Motilalbhai. No one else was granted permission to come there. Shri Laherabhai stayed for ten days and then left on Shrimad's behest and Shri Ambalalbhai departed after a fortnight. As Shrimad wished to stay in solitude, He asked Shri Ambalalbhai to take back everything from the kitchen as well as the mattresses and all the other belongings that he had brought along. Only Shri Motilalbhai remained in His service. Shri Motilalbhai kept a mattress and one small pot to drink water from for himself – everything else was sent away in a cart, which he had arranged for. Before leaving, Shri Ambalalbhai paid his obeisance to Shrimad and pledged celibacy until they met again. As he was leaving, he

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instructed Shri Motilalbhai to look after Shrimad, especially at night.

That very night, Shrimad returned to the house at around 10.30, after having meditated in the forest. Shri Motilalbhai laid out the mattress, which he had kept for his personal use, on the swing. After much insistence, Shrimad allowed it to remain there, but when Shri Motilalbhai came back to check on Him, the mattress was on the floor. Seeing a swarm of mosquitoes, he covered Shrimad with a dhoti and retired. When Shri Motilalbhai returned to check on Shrimad a little while later, he found Shrimad immersed in chanting, and the dhoti had fallen on the ground. Once again, Shri Motilalbhai covered Him. Thus, oblivious of His physical being, Shrimad remained engrossed in deep meditation. The next day, Shrimad set out for the jungle early in the morning and returned two hours later. He sat on a mat which was laid out on the attic of the small bungalow. Shri Motilalbhai placed a book in front of Him and went to the ground floor. Shrimad engrossed Himself in contemplation and meditation and left for the jungle again in the evening.

Regarding food, Shrimad had instructed Shri Motilalbhai to go to Nadiad and ask his wife to prepare chapatti and vegetable after bathing. He gave instructions such as – the food not be prepared in iron vessels, no water or oil be used in

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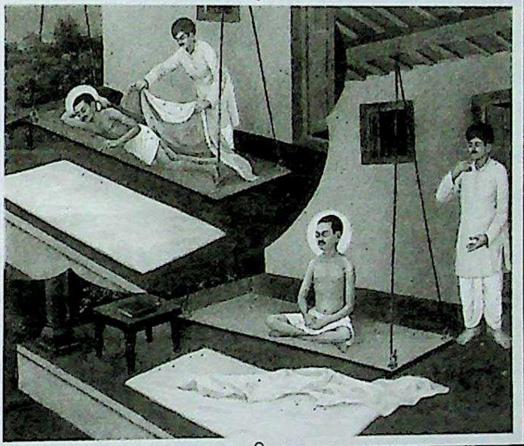

Shrimad absorbed in the state of samadhi, oblivious of His body, in Uttarsanda

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cooking the vegetables and so on. Shri Motilalbhai would go to Nadiad daily, and in accordance with Shrimad's instructions, return with a pure, sattvic meal. Shrimad ate only once a day and consumed a meal comprising of chapattis made from flour of the weight equivalent to that of 2 coins of a rupee each, a vegetable and a little milk. Noticing Shrimad's paltry intake of food, Shri Motilalbhai once wondered about the extent to which food and the body are related. Shrimad had then said, "This body is revolting against me, but I do not allow it to get the better of me." Regarding His clothing, Shrimad simply wore a short dhoti with both ends draped on His shoulders.

Shrimad's voice was so resonant that when He spoke, it could even be heard from a distance of five fields. He would sing verses of Avdhoot Shri Anandghanji Maharaj's compositions and others in His resounding voice and display the state of an exalted ascetic when He would meditate. Shrimad was in such a state of ecstasy that once He had told Shri Motilalbhai, "I do not know where I am sitting. Is this a bungalow or what is it? You may be thinking thus in your thoughts, but I do not know."

One night, Shrimad and Shri Motilalbhai were walking in the dark. Just then, Shrimad instructed Shri Motilalbhai, who was much further ahead of him, to stop and allow a snake to pass. At that

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spot, lay a heap of grass in the middle of which there was a small pathway. Shri Motilalbhai was unable to spot the snake immediately, but later, when he did see it, he was very surprised indeed. Thereafter, as they continued walking, Shrimad counselled Shri Motilalbhai on the importance of giving up indolence. He revealed that when He was the last disciple of Bhagwan Mahavira, the slightest inadvertence, caused by an inclination to answer nature's call, had resulted in all the transmigrations of His soul. He then urged Shri Motilalbhai to maintain awareness and passion for his goal.

One day, Shri Motilalbhai instructed his wife, Navalben, to bring lunch. She was told to leave after the mail train departed and wait at a distance of three or four fields, where he would come to collect it. But his wife came close to the bungalow, and Shri Motilalbhai severely admonished her for that. Shrimad came to know of this and said to Shri Motilalbhai, "Why did you get angry? Are you trying to exercise your rights as a husband? No, no, this is not the way to behave. On the contrary, you should feel obliged to her. She will attain liberation in her eighth life. Let her come here." On Shrimad's behest, Navalben obtained His darshan.

Thus, in Uttarsanda, Shrimad was immersed in meditation and scriptural studies through the day and night. He would meditate in the jungle during

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the first 'prahar' – three hour period – of the morning. During the second 'prahar', He would study in the small bungalow. In the third, He would have His meals and the like. In the fourth, He would again meditate in the jungles. Even at night, Shrimad would not sleep. Instead, He would be immersed in chanting verses. He was disinterested in thoughts of covering Himself, spreading mats or the like. He equanimously endured adversities regarding food, mosquito bites, hunger, thirst, thorns and so forth. He walked barefoot, with His focus on the ground just ahead, in order to avoid harming insects and so on. In addition, He followed the established code of conduct for Jain monks, which included refraining from brushing and bathing. Thus, He moved from one place to another, fearless and in solitude, like a lion in a jungle.

From His daily schedule, one can well surmise that He was leading the life of a vigilant ascetic of the highest order and experiencing a supreme state of abidance in the soul, where even body-consciousness was absent. Recalling the valour of all the Great Seers who were constantly absorbed in the Self, He too practised remaining in the same state. He maintained complete control over His food intake and sleep as well as His mind, body and speech. Practising complete restraint, uninfluenced by any external happenings, fully aware of His inner Self,

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He had attained a state of complete abidance in the Self. In spite of having a body, He was in a state beyond body-consciousness. Thus, in His relentless pursuits, one can observe the extraordinary prowess of His soul.

Kheda – From Uttarsanda, Shrimad left for Kheda with Shri Motilalbhai in a horse-drawn carriage. The ever compassionate Shrimad sat in the carriage solely on the condition that the driver would not cane the horse throughout their journey. In Kheda, Shrimad resided in a bungalow situated outside the village. During these solitary retreats, He would mostly remain in a meditative state. Even when He went for a walk, He would be so immersed in His own contemplations and meditation that He would be totally unaware of His physical body.

One day, as they were leaving for a stroll, Shri Motilalbhai placed his brand new footwear in front of Shrimad's feet. Shrimad wore them. After travelling for about four to six miles, He sat down for a while to rest. At this point, Shri Motilalbhai noticed that the new shoes had caused blisters on Shrimad's feet, and they were bleeding where the skin had peeled off. Shri Motilalbhai felt remorseful. He removed the footwear and cleaned the wound, gently removing the dust stuck to it. Though Shrimad was bruised, it did not concern Him in the least. When they resumed walking, there was

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not even the slightest difference in His gait. This surprised Shri Motilalbhai, who asked, "Saheb, the blisters must be quite painful, and would shift your attention." Shrimad replied, "An Enlightened One does not fear the body when attuned to the Self, therefore His faculties are never body-focused. It is you who are reminding me of the body." A little further, they spotted a monkey atop a neem tree. Shrimad remarked, "Oh Great One, you may be free of possessions and are at a place without any restrictions, but remember: this will not lead you to liberation."

Once, Shri Poojabhai Someshwar Bhatt, a Vedantin from the village of Kheda, visited Shrimad. At that time, He was reading a book. Shrimad looked very calm. He was repeating a verse from the book. The meaning of the verse was, 'May my mind be so still that even a deer can come and rub its antlers against me without running away from me.' Shrimad thoroughly enjoyed explaining the verse to Shri Poojabhai. Later, Shri Poojabhai posed many questions to Shrimad, which He answered with precision, clarity and firm conviction of the Soul. Shri Devkaranji and other monks who were stationed in Kheda were very fortunate to be with Shrimad during the 23 days of His stay there. As a result of this extraordinary association with the Enlightened One, Shri Devkaranji Muni was able to

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relinquish his dogmatic attitudes and develop true faith in Shrimad. In a letter to Shri Lalluji Muni in Vaso, he stated:

'One day, after finishing my meal, I went to where Krupanath (Shrimad) was staying. That bungalow had four floors. Param Krupalu Dev was on the third floor. Seeing His state, I felt that if I intruded just then, I would interfere with His state of bliss. So I stood behind a wall and listened. Shri Krupanath was saying the following to Himself:

In the year 47 (S. 1947), the Mahatma – Great Soul – based in Ralaj was peaceful and calm. The Mahatma residing this year in Vaso was a divine, extraordinary and supreme yogi who was dwelling in a state of Pure Consciousness. And the Supreme Being who is presently located in this wilderness is also an extraordinary, supreme yogi in a state of absolute quietude. Thus, He was describing His own evident state, beyond form and attachments.'[1]

In the above words, spoken by Shrimad Himself, there is a clear mention of the progressively increasing state of soul-centredness that He was experiencing since V.S. 1947. This incident, which

1- Dr. Bhagwandas Mehta, 'Adhyatma Rajchandra', 3rd edition, page 687

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Shri Devkaranji Muni happened to hear, became an extraordinary revelation of Shrimad's state of being.

After His retreat in the jungles, Shrimad returned to Mumbai, where He stayed briefly before heading for another retreat to Idar in V.S. 1955, on Magsar Sud 5. Shrimad's father-in-law's younger brother, Dr. Pranjivandas Mehta, was the Chief Medical Officer of Idar State at the time, and Shrimad stayed at his residence. He wished to live in anonymity so as to attain a state of total union with the Self. Since Shrimad implicitly asked Dr. Mehta not to inform anyone about His arrival, no one knew His whereabouts. He only entered the village to have meals; the rest of the time would be spent in secluded and uninhabited places, fearlessly roaming the hills and caves of Idar in solitude, immersed in contemplation and meditation. It was as though He was a living example of the divine thoughts He had woven in the unparalleled poem, 'Apurva Avsar.'

In the afternoon, Shrimad would visit a temple at the fort. Then, He would read in solitude at 'Amayi Toonk', a small resting spot along the hill, also known as 'Roothi Raninu Maliyu'. At four o'clock, He would descend from there and sit on a rock in the jungle, where He would memorise the original scriptures. He would eat His dinner at Dr. Pranjivandas' bungalow, which was near the hospital. When He did not go to the hill, He

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would remain absorbed in contemplation at the Chandan caves, which were located right behind the bungalow. The hills of Idar reverberated with His divine, ethereal voice as He meditated upon the Pure Consciousness with supreme detachment. When in retreat, Shrimad, as a general rule, did not correspond with anyone. Therefore, except for six or seven brief letters, no other written records are available from His time in Idar.

Shrimad barely spent a fortnight in absolute solitude in Idar, when news of His whereabouts reached the monks through Shri Motilalbhai. All seven monks set out to meet Him. Shri Lalluji Muni and two others rushed ahead and reached earlier than the rest. But this time, Shrimad sought complete solitude and did not even wish to associate with them. He commanded Shri Lalluji Muni and others to return. However, later, so that He could maintain His privacy and yet fulfil the monks' wishes, He suggested that they meet in a secluded spot in the jungle. He went by Himself to the hill and arranged to meet them under a mango tree. On the second day, He was chanting verses and continued chanting in a loud, fervent voice for half an hour under the mango tree. For the next half hour, He became completely still, absorbed in deep meditation. Seeing His steadfastness and abidance in the Self, the monks experienced peace.

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Shri Devkaranji Muni and others also arrived the same evening. After being instructed to go to the hill for darshan, the munis, along with Shri Saubhagyabhai's nephew, Shri Thakarshi, asked for the keys to both the Shwetambar and Digambar temples. Upon obtaining them, they opened the doors and offered their obeisance. This was the first place where Shrimad had asked the monks to worship Jineshwar Bhagwan's idols. The monks were very elated by the experience. They were elevated. Shri Thakarshi showed the monks all the places on the hill which Shrimad had visited; their hearts were brimming with joy upon seeing those places and learning how Shrimad spent His time there.

On the morning of the third day, the monks were asked to meet under the same mango tree. As Shrimad walked ahead, followed by the monks, they came across a huge boulder. Shrimad sat upon it, facing eastward, and the monks sat in front of Him. He revealed, "It is said in the scriptures that Bhagwan was seated on the Pudhvishila. This boulder is that very Pudhvishila." Seated there, Shrimad read almost one half of the text 'Bruhad Dravyasangrah', which He had personally retrieved from the Digambar Jain library. At nearly one o'clock, Shrimad and the monks headed towards the village. While walking, Shrimad chanted 'Jivamajivam davvam jinavarvasahen

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jenaniditham; devindavindavandam, vande tam savvada sirasa.' This is the first verse of the 'Bruhad Dravyasangrah'.

Unmindful of the body, oblivious to thorns, pebbles, cobwebs and sharp stones, Shrimad walked very swiftly, as if drawn by the speed of the Soul. On the fifth day, He along with the munis went high on the mountain. He informed them about a tiger dwelling nearby, asking them to remain fearless. He was seated on a huge boulder and named it 'Siddhashila'. He then introduced Himself as Siddha and began reading aloud from the text 'Dravyasangrah', giving a discourse on it for the monks to reflect upon. Having the great fortune of this exclusive association, Shri Devkaranji Muni, was overjoyed and exclaimed, "Of all the experiences we have had with our Spiritual Master, this was by far the best! Like placing the pinnacle on the dome of a temple, this occasion has been the most spiritually uplifting; the best by far!"

Shrimad blessed the monks with knowledge and wisdom for five days. They left on the sixth day as instructed. Shrimad remained in Idar, in absolute solitude, for nearly two more months, of which He spent 6 weeks in an ancient cave. In Maha Vad, after staying at Idar for two and a half months, Shrimad left for Ahmedabad, where He stayed for a day or so before embarking on His journey to Vavania -

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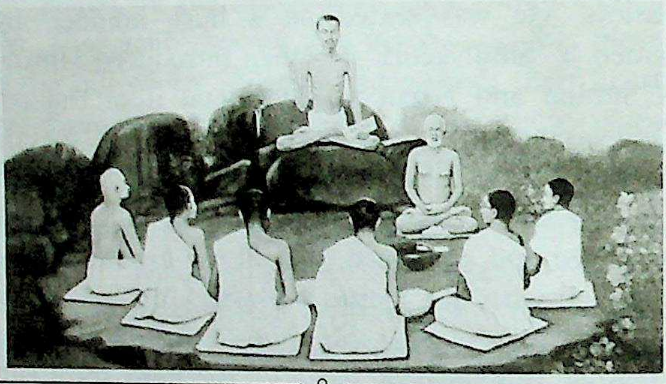

Seated on the 'Siddhashila' in the mountains of Idar, Shrimad teaching 'Bruhad Dravyasangrah' to the monks

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Morbi. He remained there for ten weeks and returned to Idar once again in the month of Vaishakh.

On His way back from Idar, Shrimad graced Naroda, where the monks were stationed. Many seekers from Ahmedabad came, too. As decided earlier, all the monks congregated at the outskirts of the village at noon and then headed for the jungles. Shrimad arrived soon after with the other aspirants. Since the monks were walking barefoot in the scorching heat, Shrimad also removed His footwear. In spite of the sweltering summer heat and blistering sand, Shrimad walked slowly and peacefully. Munishri Lalluji describes the experience vividly – '**Witnessing Him walk, even ordinary people could clearly make out that this Enlightened Being had no bearing with His physical body. Meanwhile, the seven of us were hopping about from here to there, desperately seeking shade! With great difficulty, leaping from one shady spot to another and taking frequent halts, we continued on. In the distance, there was a banyan tree; (Shrimad) went there, and so did we. Once we reached Krupalu Dev, we saw that His feet had turned completely red, as if oozing with blood. We also saw that blisters had formed.**'[1]

1- Dr. Bhagwandas Mehta, 'Adhyatma Rajchandra', 3rd edition, page 700

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On this occasion, Shrimad had uttered this one sentence, "Now, I am in a state of absolute detachment, where the condition is such that I do not utter a single word." Hearing this, Shri Devkaranji Muni exclaimed, "Then what about an Enlightened One's compassion and kindness?" Shrimad replied, "Even that kindness has to be given up in the end." Spending a day in Naroda, bestowing the knowledge of dharma to the monks and other aspirants, Shrimad reached Mumbai via Ahmedabad in the month of Jeth. And in this way, in V.S. 1955, from Magsar to Vaishakh, for a period of six months, Shrimad was away from Mumbai.

Thus, in these retreats, Shrimad, in order to adorn the temple of His spiritual endeavours with the pinnacle of completion, relentlessly pursued His spiritual efforts. Constant, unmitigated contemplation on Pure Consciousness was bringing Him closer and closer to the highest state of awareness. Though externally, He had not yet formally adopted the garb of a monk, internally He was becoming a non-attached renunciate in every way. As a means to annihilate all sorrows, to remain completely focused within, in the direction of Pure Consciousness, He swiftly advanced towards that state, with extraordinary and intense fervour. Having conquered the mind, speech, body, hunger and sleep – beyond thoughts and with all faculties directed

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inward – He revelled in a state of Pure Consciousness. Such a One, in a pure state of constant awareness, was effortlessly experiencing liberation.

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(12) The Final Stage of Shrimad's Life

At a gathering in V.S. 1955, Shrimad proclaimed His renunciation of wealth, wife, son and so on. With this, all business, social and financial ties were also severed. He followed this vow to the minutest detail – He would not keep so much as a railway ticket on Him. Thus, having renounced wealth and woman, He was almost ready for complete renunciation. This desire, which He had nurtured for years, was on the verge of being fulfilled; He was only waiting for His mother's permission. But as fate would have it, in Posh of V.S. 1956, His body was struck by an incurable disease. His body did not cooperate with Him, and began creating hindrances. First it appeared as general weakness, but was later diagnosed as colitis. As His health deteriorated, He was taken to several places

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for a change of weather. His health would improve for some time, but would relapse again. Physically, the body was becoming weaker day by day.

In Chaitra of V.S. 1956, Shrimad retreated to Dharampur for a change of weather. He continued to receive careful treatment from Dr. Pranjivandas Mehta and others. Along with the treatment to improve physical health, He continued His scriptural studies and meditation in order to maintain His steadfastness in the Self. After nearly a month in Dharampur, Shrimad visited Ahmedabad, Viramgam and other places en route to Vavania, where He stayed for approximately two months. From there, He proceeded to Morbi. A collection of the discourses conducted during this time are published in 'Shrimad Rajchandra' under the heading 'Vyakhyansaar-2'.

On Shravan Vad 10, Shrimad left Morbi for Wadhwan Camp and there, He stayed at the Limbdi State guest house for some time. While there, Shrimad personally founded 'Paramshrut Prabhavak Mandal', an organisation to disseminate the knowledge of the supreme scriptures. The collection of funds for this spiritual cause was initiated on the day of Samvatsari. If ever He needed to get involved in financial matters for this, He considered

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that a transgression of His vows.[1]

Besides establishing the 'Paramshrut Prabhavak Mandal', in Wadhwan Camp, Shrimad dictated 108 lessons of 'Pragnavbodh Mokshamala' that can be

1- 'Paramshrut Prabhavak Mandal' is functional even to this day. In the beginning, to promote texts on the logic and philosophy derived from the teachings of the dispassionate Tirthankar Bhagwans, the scriptures were translated in Hindi and published every two months. Later, from time to time, it also started publishing some renowned and rare texts. To commemorate Shrimad, these were printed under the name 'Shrimad Rajchandra Jain Shastramala'. In V.S. 1961, the organisation published the literary works of Shrimad in the volume entitled 'Shrimad Rajchandra'. Mahatma Gandhiji was a trustee and Shri Revashankarbhai, the chief executive of this establishment. After Shri Revashankarbhai passed away, the activities of the organisation slowed down. From V.S. 2014, the administration of the establishment was taken over by Shrimad Rajchandra Ashram, Agas.

Similarly, in Magsar, V.S. 1956, inspired by Shrimad, a library named 'Shri Subodhak Pathshala' was established in Khambhat. Shri Mansukhbhai Kiratchand was entrusted with selecting and purchasing the books. Most of the proceedings were handled by Shri Ambalalbhai. Initially, it functioned from a rented premise located on the corner of Kumarwada in Khambhat, but later, in V.S. 1968, the library shifted to an independent building specially built for the purpose, in Lonkapari, where it is presently situated.

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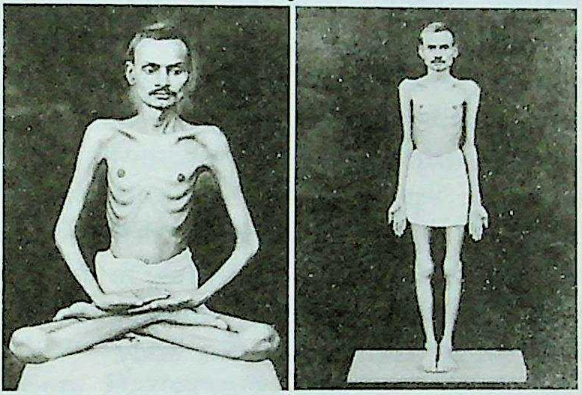

Two photographs of Shrimad taken at Wadhwan Camp in the lotus posture and the standing meditative posture

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likened to 108 beads of a mala. Acceding to the devotional request of Shri Sukhlalbhai, a mumukshu from Viramgam, two photographs – one in a lotus posture and the other in a standing meditative pose were taken of Him. 'What will sustain us? If we have Your photograph, then we can look at it for support.' Because Shri Sukhlalbhai expressed these sentiments, the world was fortunate enough to receive these remarkable photographs of Shrimad. For this, the world is indebted to Shri Sukhlalbhai. A day after the photographs were taken, Shrimad confided in Shri Mansukhbhai Devshibhai that while He was being photographed, He was in the same state of dispassion as Shri Parshwanath Prabhu was when He was tormented by Kamath. In spite of being in an extremely physically debilitated state, He remained motionless, unflinching, in the standing meditative posture. This gives an understanding of His state, which transcended the body.

Thus, in Wadhwan Camp, Shrimad presented the world with two great gifts: the establishment of the 'Paramshrut Prabhavak Mandal' and the two photographs which depict His detached state. In V.S. 1957 on Kartak Vad 7, He left Wadhwan Camp for Ahmedabad, where He spent 27 days on the banks of the Sabarmati River, at Aga Khan's bungalow. Here, Shrimad briefly wrote the 12 vows for His mother, Devba. And to take these vows, He sent her, along with Shri Ambalalbhai, to the monks.

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Shrimad's wife Jhabakba also accompanied them. Shrimad had two handwritten texts, 'Jnanarnav' and 'Swamikartikeyanupreksha', which He asked His mother Devba and wife Jhabakba to offer to Shri Lalluji Muni and Shri Devkaranji Muni. He instructed Shri Devkaranji Muni to recite the chapter on celibacy from 'Jnanarnav'. After doing so, Shri Devkaranji Muni requested the revered mother, "Now, please grant permission so Param Krupalu Dev (Shrimad) can embrace complete renunciation and many souls can be uplifted." To this, Devba replied, "I am too attached; I am unable to let go of my attachment for Him. Once His health improves, I will grant Him permission to become a renunciate."

While in Ahmedabad, Shrimad, blessing Shri Ambalalbhai with a unique opportunity to be with Him, removed his indolence and awakened his consciousness. As a result of this, he attained self-realisation. Furthermore, Shrimad summoned Shri Lalluji Muni and Shri Devkaranji Muni, and after giving His last instructions, He said, "Do not differentiate between me and the Dispassionate Lord."[1]

1- Bhai Shri Lallubhai and Shri Naginbhai from Khambhat had gone to Wadhwan to meet Shrimad. As they were returning to Khambhat, Shrimad had said, "Whether we meet again or not, whether there is any further association or not, maintain an unwavering faith in me. There is no difference between me and Shri Mahavira Dev. The difference is just of this piece of clothing."

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In V.S. 1957 in the month of Magsar Vad, Shrimad arrived in Mumbai from Ahmedabad. The pain from dysentery was getting aggravated day by day, and Shrimad's body became increasingly feeble. He was taken to Matunga and Sion in Mumbai, Tithal near Valsad, and other places by the sea. On Maha Vad 6, Shrimad returned to Wadhwan Camp. In spite of the exemplary care offered by the seekers and near and dear ones, the body was wearing out day by day. His body, which weighed 130 - 140 pounds in good health, had reduced to 57 pounds. Yet, in complete awareness of the Soul, He would blissfully remain absorbed in the Self. In such a dispassionate state, He stayed in Wadhwan Camp until Fagan Sud 6. Thereafter, He arrived at Rajkot, where He stayed until the end of His life.

After Shrimad came to Rajkot from Wadhwan Camp, His physical state kept deteriorating. Here, many seekers availed the benefit of His darshan and offered their services, but since the body had become very weak, the doctors took special care to ensure that Shrimad did not have to talk much. Even if Shrimad had to dictate any letters, they would barely be a line or two. Many seekers and family members had come to serve Him, yet Shrimad remained absorbed in the Self. Elucidating upon His state, He writes in a letter dated Fagan Vad 3, V.S. 1957:

'The journey was to be completed with great

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speed. Then, en route came the desert of Sahara.

There was much burden on my head. Making efforts such that it can be experienced in a short time through the strength of the soul, the feet have undertaken the fatigue of the inevitable destiny.

That which is the nature of the Self does not change in any other way. This indeed is an extraordinary marvel. There is undisturbed steadfastness in the Self.'[1]

From such statements, one can surmise that He knew that His life was coming to an end, so He had duly prepared Himself for it. From Fagan Vad 13, His health continued to deteriorate, yet oblivious of attachment to the body, Shrimad remained absorbed in the Self. On Chaitra Sud 9, Shrimad expounded the supreme secret of the path of spirituality in the form of a poem. This was His final message. Even in that, He has mentioned that a yogi absorbed in the bliss of the Self neither aspires to live, nor is he disturbed by death. In this way, the body, made up of matter, was functioning according to its perishable nature, governed by the manifestation of karmas while Shrimad's soul dwelled in its Pure Nature.

In spite of the ongoing, meticulous treatment

1- 'Shrimad Rajchandra', 6th edition, page 658 (Patrank-951)

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administered by skilled doctors, the unsurpassed service offered by devoted seekers, and the caring ministrations of near and dear ones, because He was not destined to have a long life, all efforts proved futile and He lost the strength to even get up or sit. Then came Chaitra Vad 4, the evening before He left the body. Shrimad told Shri Mansukhbhai, Shri Revashankarbhai, Shri Narbherambhai and others, "Do not worry, this Soul is eternal. It will certainly attain the highest state. Maintain peace and equanimity. There is no time for the pearls of wisdom that could have been uttered by this body. You should put in your efforts." Due to their attachment, they were unable to understand such a clear warning and remained under the false notion that these kind of words were uttered due to His debilitating state.[1]

1- Justice Shri Dharshibhai came to Rajkot on Chaitra Sud 13 to visit and offer service, and remained there until Chaitra Vad 4. During his stay in Rajkot, Shrimad asked him to write a number of verses. In the evening of Chaitra Vad 4, he had to leave for Morbi, and sought Shrimad's permission to do so. Shrimad repeatedly asked him, "Are you in a rush?" To this, Shri Dharshibhai replied that he would return in a couple of days. At last Shrimad said, "Dharshibhai, there is much to be said. There is no time. Because of my association, Ambalal, Saubhagyabhai and Munishri Lalluji have attained unprecedented self-realisation." At the time, Shri Dharshibhai took these words as an ordinary conversation. He had not realised that those were the last divine words spoken for his future spiritual upliftment.

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The activities of the last 12 hours before passing away have been written in a letter by His younger brother, Shri Mansukhbhai, as follows:

'At 2.30 a.m., He caught a severe cold. At that time, He said, "Do not worry. Your brother's death will be in the state of samadhi." After receiving treatment, the cold abated. At 7.45 in the morning, milk was offered, which He accepted. The mind, speech and body remained in a complete and absolute state of purity. At 8.45 a.m. He said, "Mansukh, do not be sad. Take care of mother. I am now abiding in the Self." At 7.30 a.m. He instructed me to transfer Him onto a couch from the bed He was in. I felt He should not be moved in such an enfeebled state, but He commanded that it be done immediately, so I shifted Him onto a couch on which He could recline in a meditative state. On that couch, in a state of samadhi, that venerable body and soul disassociated from each other. One could not discern even the slightest sign of the Soul passing away. As the life force kept receding, His face glowed ever more radiantly. The photograph that was taken in Wadhwan Camp in a standing pose was the same state of samadhi in which He had reclined on the couch for five hours. Any signs of wanting to answer nature's call, drooling, water in the eyes

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or perspiration were totally absent from 7.45 a.m. to 2.00 p.m., when He left His mortal body. Normally He would pass stools an hour after drinking milk, but nothing happened on that day. He had controlled His body like one would control a mechanical toy by winding the key. In such a state of samadhi, that Pure Soul severed its ties with the body.'[1]

Thus, on Tuesday, Chaitra Vad 5 in V.S. 1957, at two in the afternoon, Shrimad left His mortal body in Rajkot. Shri Navalchandbhai was present at the time of Shrimad's passing away. He wrote to Shri Ambalalbhai about Shrimad's countenance at the time of leaving the body:

'At the time when Krupalu Dev became established in meditation, the condition of the body demonstrated an absolute state of absorption, and that remained the same till the end. The breathing was like that of one who is asleep, first from the navel, and at the time of leaving the body, the breath continued from the throat to the mouth for some time. It appeared as if this embodiment of consciousness and radiance, would come out of meditation at any moment and bless us with nectar-like words. This remarkable countenance was experienced

1- Brahmachariji Shri Govardhandasji, 'Shrimad Rajchandra Jeevankala', 8th edition, page 219

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by everyone. Krupalushri, due to restraint over the mind, speech and body, had effortlessly brought about a state of the body which for others seemed unattainable. One could decipher from the position of the body, breathing pattern etc., that there was an absolute awareness of the Self till the passing away from the body. I clearly understand what had transpired, but I cannot put it in words.

His form at the time was incomparably radiant, peaceful and captivating. It looked so beautiful that one's eyes were never satiated just by looking at it. It would naturally appear so to us, who are attached to His virtues, but others, who were present for different reasons, were also filled with wonderment and reverence. I am unable to pen the feelings that arise while describing the extraordinary form at that time.'[1]

Thus, this exceptional, emancipated, dispassionate Divine Being, at a young age of just 33 years and 5 months, in a state of absolute purity and abidance in the Self, left the physical identity named Rajchandra, in Rajkot. Once, in Nadiad, while taking His coat off and handing it to someone, Shrimad had said, "As I give this coat to you, I will leave this body and depart. For the One who has realised

1- Dr. Bhagwandas Mehta, 'Adhyatma Rajchandra', 3rd edition, pages 776-777

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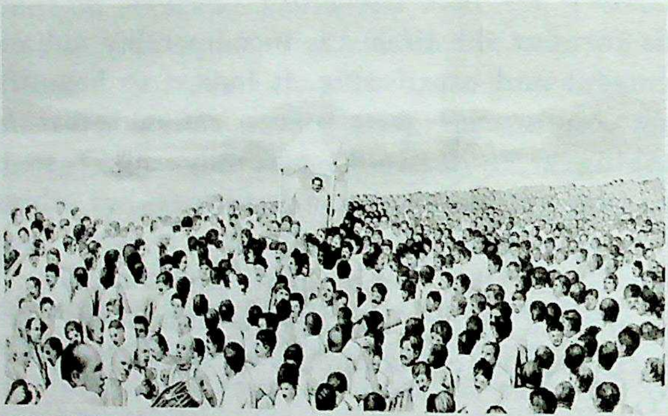

Funeral procession of Shrimad's mortal body at Rajkot

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that the soul is separate from the body, for Him, leaving the body is like removing a coat." So it can be said that Shrimad shed the 'coat' of His physical identity – 'Raj', in the town of Rajkot. By receiving the last ashes of His benevolent mortal body, the land became blessed, a place of pilgrimage, and its name – 'Raj-kot' – was proved right.

Thus, Shrimad, absorbed in the bliss of the Self, in spite of intense pain from a fatal ailment – remaining free from delusion and anxiety, experiencing the Self, thus virtually reaching a pure, unbroken state of self-experience or omniscience, and winning over death – attained death in the form of dissociation from the body.

Having bloomed in the soils of India for the upliftment of the world, the divine flame of this rare entity, radiating a vibrant spiritual light, attained an immortal state. Though His body perished at the gross physical level, He lives forever in His writings.

His passing was covered by 'Mumbai Samachar', 'The Pioneer', 'The Indian Spectator' and many other dailies. Some newspapers paid homage to Shrimad by printing front page articles about Him.

The news of Shrimad's demise shocked His admirers, fans and followers, who felt an acute sense of separation. They cried inconsolably – some out of attachment, some out of reverence and some

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out of gratitude. The separation from their Sadguru, their wish-fulfilling tree, was simply unbearable.

Shri Ambalalbhai was devastated. He cried for days on end in the agony of separation. In heart-rending words, he expresses his despair:

'Om

In the vast forest, there is just one extremely beautiful, peace-giving tree upon which, quietly, softly, merrily the birds delight. If that tree is suddenly set ablaze by a wildfire, imagine how much pain the birds, whose happiness was derived from that tree, would feel at that time. There would not be even a moment of peace! Alas! Even great poets would be incapable of describing the suffering of that time. Inflicting the same intense pain on us poor souls in this vast world, Oh! God, where have You gone?

Oh! Land of Bharat, could you not bear the weight of the God who lived in a state completely beyond the body? If that was so, you should have unburdened yourself of this poor soul. You have unnecessarily made me a burden on your soil.

Oh! Terrible time, did you feel no pity? In the great famine of '56, you devoured lakhs of people. Still, you were not satisfied; and if that did not

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satiate you, then you should have consumed this mortal first. Instead, you gave me a lifetime of separation from this Supremely Peaceful Lord! You should have used your cruelty and harshness towards me! Are you smirking at me?

Oh! Shasandevi, where did your strength disappear at this time in the face of death? He had served as a great cause in uplifting your regime. You used to prostrate to Him with your mind, speech and body and be at His service. Which pleasures were you immersed in, that you did not think about what death was up to?

Oh Lord! Without You, who will we complain to? When You have decided to become so heartless, who else will show compassion? Oh Lord! Your infinite grace, boundless kindness, compassionate heart, gentle speech, charismatic power, intense detachment, remarkable self-realisation, absolutely radiant right knowledge, right belief and right character, divine sport, unfathomable peace, unconditional compassion, selfless imparting of wisdom, unprecedented satsangs – these and many more virtues, each surpassing the other – what do I recount? Even scholarly poets and celestial beings are incapable of singing the glory of Your virtues, so how can this pen be even remotely capable of it? Upon remembering Your supremely exalted virtues,

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with a pure heart I prostrate at Your Lotus Feet, through mind, body, and speech. May the strength of Your experience, the words of wisdom uttered by You, and the self-realisation – the seed of omniscience You have endowed me with, protect me. I wish this always. You have given me this eternal rosary of remembrance of our separation, which I will never forget.

Remorse, remorse and remorse; I can think of nothing else. Day and night, I just cry. I cannot think of anything else.'[1]

In Kavitha, upon hearing of Shrimad's demise, Shri Lalluji Muni observed a fast and remained immersed in meditation in the jungle. Tears flowed incessantly from Shri Popatlalbhai's eyes for six months. Shrimad's wife, Jhabakba, spent time in solitude, only repeating what Shrimad had given her to remember. Shrimad's mother Devba had a very soft heart, and at any mention of Shrimad, her eyes would well up with tears. Thus, Shrimad's passing left everyone's hearts in turmoil. Each one suffered the agony of separation according to the degree to which they had recognised this Great Soul.

1- Brahmachariji Shri Govardhandasji, 'Shrimad Rajchandra Jeevankala', 8th edition, pages 221-223

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(13) Shrimad's Devotees

As a flower exudes fragrance, it naturally attracts bees from all directions; similarly, Shrimad's multi-faceted personality impressed a multitude of seekers, householders and monks alike, drawing them towards Him. Since He was a child, His school teachers and other students, the elders in the village, literature enthusiasts, admirers of fine handwriting and those fascinated by His avdhan powers, astrology and powers of clairvoyance – all joined His fan following, which numbered in thousands. Besides that, His inner virtues and His power to lead scholars and seekers on the spiritual path by explaining the hidden meaning of the scriptures attracted a group of devotees who constantly desired to be with Him and serve Him. Many of them were completely attuned to Him in all respects. They had become

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so committed to Shrimad that they would ardently follow His guidance and act accordingly, believing their ultimate welfare to lie only in that. They accepted Shrimad as their Sadguru. Many of them attained self-realisation by following His commands, and many more reached an elevated spiritual state. Thus, many people looked up to Shrimad with regard, reverence, and devotion – depending on their personal level of understanding.

Though Shrimad's internal state was that of a renunciate, His social standing was still that of a householder, so He intentionally remained aloof from society. He did this out of concern that people who became acquainted with Him, upon seeing Him dressed as a householder, may doubt Him and thereby accrue karmic bondage. He did not want this to happen. As a result, during His lifetime, only a small group of people truly recognised who He was. The aspirants who truly knew Shrimad and were fortunate to receive His direct and intimate association were: Juthabhai Ujamshi, Saubhagyabhai Lallubhai, Ambalal Lalchand, Lalluji Muni, Mahatma Gandhiji, Devkaranji Muni, Mansukhbhai Kiratchand, Popatlal Mohkamchand, Dungarshibhai Gosalia, Dharshibhai Kushalchand, Sukhlal Chaganlal, Maneklal Ghelabhai, Revashankarbhai Jagjivanbhai, Mansukhbhai Ravjibhai, Tribhuvanbhai Manekchand, Jhaverchand Seth, Khimji Devji,

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Kunwarji Maganlal, Mansukhbhai Devshi, Dr. Pranjivandas Mehta, Mansukhram Suryaram Tripathi and a few others. Each one of them was deeply inspired by Shrimad, and their lives were transformed by Him. Through Shrimad's guidance, four of these aspirants attained self-realisation during His lifetime. In addition, the course of the life of the father of the nation, Mahatma Gandhiji, changed due to his association with Shrimad. Let us become briefly acquainted with these five great ones.

(i) Shri Juthabhai Ujamshibhai

Amongst all of Shrimad's devotees – the honour of being the first one to come in close association with Him goes to Shri Juthabhai. His true recognition of Shrimad as an Enlightened Being proved beneficial for Shri Ambalalbhai and eventually, Shri Lalluji Muni as well. This great seeker uplifted his soul in a short association with Shrimad at a very young age. He was born on Kartik Sud 2 of V.S. 1923 – he was just a year older than Shrimad, that is, almost the same age as Shrimad. His father was Shri Ujamshibhai and mother was Jamnabai. He was the grandson of the religiously prominent Sheth Mallichand Jechand of Ahmedabad and the younger brother of Sheth Jesanghbhai Ujamshibhai. He was born into a Sthanakvasi Jain family and had studied until the fourth standard in English. He was a devoted, cultured and religious person,

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Shri Juthabhai

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besides being very intelligent. Close association with Shrimad, accelerated his devotion greatly. A result of his unprecedented devotion kindled within, in a short span, samyaktva – 'that leads to the path of liberation'. One can gauge his high spiritual state by the adjective Shrimad used when addressing him – seeing Shri Juthabhai's fervour for spiritual integrity, Shrimad called him 'Satyaparayan'.

Shrimad went to Ahmedabad in V.S. 1944 to have 'Mokshmala' published. He brought a letter of recommendation from Shri Vinaychand Popatbhai Daftari, a resident of Morbi, for Sheth Jesangbhai Ujamshibhai to help and guide Him in the matter. Accordingly, Sheth Jesangbhai assisted Shrimad. At that time, Shrimad had to stay in Ahmedabad for two to two and half months at a stretch. Since Sheth Jesangbhai often had to leave town on business, in his absence, he entrusted his younger brother, Shri Juthabhai, to take care of Shrimad. This is how Shri Juthabhai was introduced to Shrimad. During that period, Shrimad had given a remarkable avdhan demonstration in Shri Dalpatbhai Bhagubhai's compound. Once, Shri Juthabhai chanced upon a visit to Sheth Dalpatbhai's library with Shrimad, where he observed that Shrimad was able to imbibe the essence of the books just by turning the pages. Besides these incidences, by witnessing Shrimad's ability to know what a person was thinking and

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also from impressions carried forward from the past, Shri Juthabhai felt an ever-increasing attraction towards Shrimad. His wife Ugariben, was also very devoted to Shrimad.

As their relationship grew deeper, Shrimad always stayed at Shri Juthabhai's residence when He visited Ahmedabad. When Shrimad visited Ahmedabad in V.S. 1945, in the month of Kartik, He stayed on the upper floor of Shri Juthabhai's residence in Cheepa Pol, blessing him with 15 days of satsang. Thereafter, in the month of Fagan, Shri Juthabhai had an opportunity to go to Morbi with his paternal uncle, Shri Rangjibhai, and stay there for a month. Shrimad was in Morbi at the time, so Shri Juthabhai was blessed to spend several sanctified moments with Him. Later, in the month of Ashadh, Shrimad had again stayed at Shri Juthabhai's house for a few days and blessed him by spending invaluable time with him. They also travelled to Bharuch for a few days together. When not in direct contact, the two regularly corresponded through letters regarding spiritual matters. Around 20 letters addressed to Shri Juthabhai by Shrimad are presently available. Most of these letters are concise, barely three or four letters among them are lengthy, yet in every single letter, one can clearly see Shrimad's spiritual love for Shri Juthabhai.

Both Shri Juthabhai and Shrimad hailed from

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Sthanakvasi families that traditionally did not believe in idol worship. However, the quest for Truth first brought about a transformation in Shrimad's thoughts about idol worship, and later, because of Shri Juthabhai's close association with Him, his attitude also changed. Slander by the dogmatic sectarians on account of this, hurt the sensitive Shri Juthabhai. At that time, Shrimad would counsel him to have patience and not be remorseful. Once Shrimad had adopted the truth, He remained unaffected by the prevalent opposition. The letters He wrote during this time shed considerable light on His virtues, such as adherence to the truth, non-reactiveness and internal equipoise, among others.[1]

Shri Juthabhai had placed Shrimad on a supremely high pedestal. Even then, Shrimad, humility personified, always taught him to remain firm in following the religion of the Dispassionate Ones, encouraging him to worship His presiding diety, Shri Parshwanath etc. Despite having conquered the great foes of pride and deceit, the inordinately virtuous Shrimad would time and again show humbleness in His letters. But seeing Him through the discerning eyes of a sincere seeker, Shri Juthabhai recognised Him as a Sadguru. His exalted love for Shrimad had surged to such a crescendo that he

1- 'Shrimad Rajchandra', 6th edition, Patranks 36, 37, 41, 42 etc.

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could no longer bear the separation from Shrimad and would fervently pine for Shrimad's personal visits and association. From V.S. 1945, Shri Juthabhai's health began to deteriorate. As a result, he started feeling deep anguish at the thought that if he were to die, he would be deprived of this unique spiritual association. This left him mortified. Shrimad repeatedly preached not to worry or feel discontent, and to immerse himself in meditation instead. In addition, He inspired Shri Juthabhai to continue his spiritual efforts. Shrimad comforted him, saying:

'Continuously remain in a state of equipoise. Believe that I am sitting near you. ...

Remember that Divine Entity before initiating even the smallest action; He is right beside you.'[1]

After V.S. 1946, Shri Juthabhai's health progressively deteriorated, but through Shrimad's letters, he began blissfully dwelling in a state of supreme detachment and prepared himself for passing away in a state of complete awareness. On the strength of Shrimad's direct and indirect association explicitly for the benefit of the soul, he kindled self-realisation within him. In spite of his obvious detachment and self-abidance, his family remained unaware of his inner state until the very end of his life.

1- 'Shrimad Rajchandra', 6th edition, page 184 (Patrank-59)

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In V.S. 1946 on Ashadh Sud 9, Shri Juthabhai passed away at the very young age of 23. Shrimad had noted the date and time of his death two months prior and had asked Shri Chaganlal Becharlal to inform Shri Juthabhai regarding this. Shrimad's prophecy of Shri Juthabhai's time of death proved correct with a difference of just a few hours. Due to the mind being involved in worldly entanglements, there was a slight discrepancy in the prophecy, as Shrimad had explained later. The news of Shri Juthabhai's demise was a deep blow and cause of immense grief for Shrimad. A day after his death, Shrimad has noted:

'How should I remember the virtues of that Pure Soul? Where there is no possibility of forgetting, how can it be termed as remembering?

His very name meant Embodiment of Truth. The state of His soul was such that he was dispassion personified.

His illusionary passions had attenuated considerably. He was supremely attached to the Dispassionate Ones, had great apathy towards the world, the importance of devotion was forever kindled in his heart, he had tremendous capacity to bear pain with equanimity, delusion had all but left his soul, a genuine passion for liberation had beautifully lit up within

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him – such was the Pure Soul of Shri Juthabhai, which departed today from this part of the world. He became free from his comrades. Fully rejoicing in dharma, he unexpectedly completed his lifespan.'[1]

The intensity of the spiritual love between Shrimad and Shri Juthabhai – His pillar on the spiritual path, is reflected in the following letter written by Shrimad to Shri Ambalalbhai:

'The resting place of this soul, in this life, has been snatched away by the strong clutches of death. Wisdom does not leave any scope for grievance; and yet his superlative virtues command me to do so. I remember him deeply; I cannot write any further.'[2]

(ii) Shri Saubhagyabhai Lallubhai

Foremost amongst Shrimad's devotees, the one whom Shrimad addressed as 'Hridayroop' and 'Param vishraam Shri Subhagya'. Shri Saubhagyabhai epitomised simplicity, gentleness and surrendership. Shrimad's divine soulmate, he was the personification of true virtues. From the entire available collection of letters that Shrimad has written, more than one fourth of them were

1- 'Shrimad Rajchandra', 6th edition, page 217, (Patrank-117)

2- Ibid., page 217, (Patrank-118)

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Shri Saubhagyabhai

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addressed to Shri Saubhagyabhai. This in itself is proof of the depth of their relationship.

Shri Saubhagyabhai was born in Saurashtra in V.S. 1880 in the town of Sayla, popularly known as 'the village of the devotees'. He was a keen seeker with a helping nature and a pure heart. Shri Saubhagyabhai was 67 years old when he first met Shrimad. Though Shrimad was 44 years younger than him, from their very first meeting, Shri Saubhagyabhai developed tremendous reverence for Shrimad, who possessed remarkable spiritual powers. Thereafter, Shri Saubhagyabhai constantly remained in touch with Shrimad through letters, and whenever possible, he would also reap the benefit of personal association with Shrimad. Through His deep love and unprecedented guidance, Shri Saubhagyabhai reached a very high spiritual state by the end of his life and passed away in the commendable state of Samadhi. Even 'Shri Atmasiddhi Shastra' was composed by Shrimad by acceding to Shri Saubhagyabhai's sincere request.

Shri Saubhagyabhai's father, Shri Lallubhai, was previously a state administrator in Limbdi, but due to a dispute with the governing authority, he lost his position and ended up settling in Sayla. In time, his financial situation started to decline, and he was anxious about how to improve it. Knowing that ascetics from Marwad were particularly adept

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at mantras, he set out for Ratlam, hoping to bolster his finances by appeasing an ascetic. There, Shri Lallubhai encountered a renowned ascetic, served him well, won him over and expressed his desires for financial gains. However, this spiritually advanced ascetic rebuked him, saying it was most unbecoming for such a wise man to seek worldly favours, rather than spiritual wisdom, from a renunciate. Asking for forgiveness, Shri Lallubhai requested him to show him a method for attaining self-realisation. The ascetic explained the means to directly experience the blissful Self. He further added that if this knowledge was shared with a worthy person, it would help that person in attaining self-realisation. After returning to Sayla, Shri Lallubhai passed on this knowledge to Shri Saubhagyabhai and also recommended that he should share it with a worthy soul, should he meet one.

When Shri Saubhagyabhai learnt of Shrimad's avdhan powers, he felt that if he revealed this secret to Him, it would benefit the world. So he requested permission from his father to share the secret with Shrimad, which he granted.

Shri Saubhagyabhai left for Morbi in the first Bhadarva of V.S. 1946, after receiving his father's consent. Once he reached Morbi, he learnt that Shrimad was in Jetpar, at the home of His brother-in-law, Shri Chatrabhuj Bechar. So, he left for

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Jetpar. Before Shri Saubhagyabhai's arrival, Shrimad could see in His pure knowledge that someone named Shri Saubhagyabhai was coming to visit Him with the purpose of divulging the secret of self-realisation. Shrimad wrote the matter on a piece of paper and put it in the safe next to His seat. When Shri Saubhagyabhai arrived, Shrimad welcomed the guest, greeting him by name. Shri Saubhagyabhai was surprised and wondered, 'He does not even know me. We have never met or seen each other before, nor has He been intimated about my arrival, so how could He address me by my name?' Just then, Shrimad asked Shri Saubhagyabhai to open the safe and read the note inside. Shri Saubhagyabhai took the note and read it, only to find that the matter which he had come to divulge was already written on it! He thought, 'Here is a great man with divine knowledge – what could I possibly show Him? On the contrary, I should be learning from Him!' To further test Shrimad's knowledge, Shri Saubhagyabhai asked Him which direction the door of his house in Sayla faced. Shrimad answered correctly, which immensely astounded him. He prostrated himself three times before Shrimad. At the time, Shrimad also entered an extraordinary state of Samadhi. On this occasion, Shrimad explained the meaning of the verse, 'tarna othe dunger re, dunger koi dekhe nahin' and advised him how to keep his desires at bay.

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Thus, from the very first meeting, there was an inner connection between them and each was immensely elated at meeting the other. This is explicitly mentioned in Shrimad's first letter (Patrank-132), written to Shri Saubhagyabhai from Vavania in the first Bhadarva Vad 13, soon after they met. The very next week, Shrimad wrote a very long letter to Shri Saubhagyabhai, addressing him as 'Atmaviveksampanna Bhai Shri Saubhagyabhai' – One who possesses discerning knowledge of the Self. In this way, after the very first meeting, correspondence through letters had begun. From the month of Bhadarva in V.S. 1946 to the month of Jeth in V.S. 1953 – that is, in the seven year span starting from their first meeting until Shri Saubhagyabhai's passing away – there are approximately 244 letters available today which were written by Shrimad to Shri Saubhagyabhai. The letters written to him are detailed and frequent. The vivid and exclusive ways in which Shrimad addresses Shri Saubhagyabhai and signs off at the end are rare, not found in letters He has written to anyone else.

In His letters to Shri Saubhagyabhai, Shrimad has opened up His heart and disclosed His intrinsic state. He has confided in Shri Saubhagyabhai about the worldly entanglements He faced; and with that, He has given a highly detailed account of the extraordinary inner state He was experiencing in the midst of it all. Shrimad's inner state, predestined

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karma, wish to propagate the spiritual path and eagerness to renounce the world are elucidated upon at great length in these letters, allowing aspirants to glimpse into Shrimad's spiritual life. Besides that, Shrimad has written letters in which He counsels Shri Saubhagyabhai to remain above worldly entanglements, not feel helpless in times of financial crisis and remain firmly rooted in the Self. When Shri Saubhagyabhai wrote letters asking Shrimad to alleviate his financial difficulties, Shrimad would reply, explaining that he should never desire any worldly gains from an Enlightened Being, but only seek the elevation of the soul. Shrimad would also pose many questions related to spirituality in His letters and ask Shri Saubhagyabhai to ponder over their solutions. The causes of transmigration of the soul; the nature of the world; the path to attain liberation from the world; the greatness of devotion; the fruits of following the commands of an Enlightened Being; the importance of spiritual discourses; an Enlightened Being's conduct; the importance of a living Sadguru; the nectar-like experience of the self; recollection of past births; elaboration upon omniscience and many other spiritually pertinent topics were discussed in Shrimad's letters to Shri Saubhagyabhai for him to reflect upon.

Besides this wealth of correspondence, Shri

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Saubhagyabhai was blessed with many occasions in which he received several days of direct association with Shrimad. In V.S. 1946 in the second Bhadarva Vad, while Shrimad was in Morbi en route to Anjar (where Shri Saubhagyabhai owned a shop), Shri Saubhagyabhai spent four to five days with Shrimad. On His return from Anjar, after three days in Vavania, Shri Saubhagyabhai took Shrimad to Sayla in Aso Vad. Shrimad stayed there for a week before proceeding to Khambhat. Thus, in the 8 to 10 weeks immediately following their first meeting, Shri Saubhagyabhai had spent nearly one month in very close association with Shrimad. Besides that, in the Paryushan of V.S. 1947 in Ralaj and other places; in V.S. 1948 in Vavania; in V.S. 1949 for a while in Mumbai and also during Paryushan, when Shrimad was in retreat; in V.S. 1950 in Mumbai for some time; in V.S. 1951 for almost two months in Vavania, Sayla, Ranpur, Hadamtala, Vadva, Khambhat and other places; in V.S. 1952 for 8 to 10 weeks in Kavitha, Ralaj, Vadva, Khambhat and other places, while He was in retreat and in V.S. 1953 in Sayla and Idar, Shri Saubhagyabhai was blessed to be with Shrimad.

In Sayla, Shri Saubhagyabhai had a close friend by the name of Shri Dungarshibhai Gosalia, who was older to him. He was intelligent and logical, and having mastered certain yogic practices, had

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exhibited several miraculous feats. Because of this, Shri Saubhagyabhai faithfully believed him to be an Enlightened One. However, after hearing Shrimad's discourses and through the wisdom he received in Shrimad's letters, his faith in Shrimad grew stronger. He attained supreme devotion, much like that of a faithful wife towards her husband. Truly recognising the Enlightened Being, he cleared his notion of believing Shri Dungarshibhai to be enlightened. After meeting Shrimad and corresponding with Him, Shri Dungarshibhai also developed faith in Shrimad and surrendered to Him. In this manner, Shri Saubhagyabhai was freed from the influence of Shri Dungarshibhai. In a letter written in V.S. 1953, Jeth Sud 14, he wrote to Shrimad regarding this matter, stating that he had completely gotten rid of his faith regarding Shri Dungarshibhai.

Shrimad travelled to Vavania from Nadiad in Kartik of V.S. 1953, where He remained until summer. At the time, Shri Saubhagyabhai's health had completely deteriorated due to chronic fever, so he repeatedly requested Shrimad to bless him with His presence before he passed away. Shrimad had asked him to reflect in depth upon 'Shri Atmasiddhi Shastra', which he was following diligently. In the end, in Vaishakh of V.S. 1953, when Shri Saubhagyabhai was pining for Him, Shrimad gave him the benefit of His close association for ten days in Sayla and then

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for ten days in Idar, inspiring him to make fervent efforts towards attaining self-realisation. Thereafter, in order that he was able to pass away in a state of Samadhi, Shrimad wrote Shri Saubhagyabhai three letters from Mumbai which inspired self-awareness. In these letters, Shrimad specially motivated, guided and inspired him with four verses depicting: the state of soul-awareness; the ecstasy of experience; the state of abiding in the Soul and the state of the Supreme Being as expounded by Pandit Shri Banarasidas in 'Samaysaarnatak'.

In one of these letters, He wrote:

'Even param yogis like Shri Rushabhdeva and others were unable to retain their physical bodies. That body has one special feature, which is that while one is associated with it, having attained non-attachment and overcome delusion, one should know the evident and experienceable Self, thus becoming free from everything, so that there remains no more transmigration. While parting from that body, the degree to which one remains non-attached, non-deluded and truly equanimous – that is the extent to which one is close to liberation. Such is the conviction of the Supremely Enlightened Being.'[1]

1- 'Shrimad Rajchandra', 6th edition, page 604 (Patrank-780)

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Moreover, since Shri Saubhagyabhai was approaching the end of his life, Shrimad sent Shri Ambalalbhai from Khambhat to Sayla to assist him in passing away in a state of Samadhi.

Internalising Shrimad's preaching, Shri Saubhagyabhai wrote a letter to Shrimad on Jeth Sud 14 in V.S. 1953 stating:

'Now, please shower Your grace upon this poor servant in all ways.

The body and the Soul are separate. The body is inanimate. The Soul is Consciousness. The Consciousness was not directly experienced by me, but by Your grace, for the past 8 days, I can now experience it as distinctly separate. And day and night, by Your grace, I am effortlessly aware that this is Consciousness and that is the body. I write this simply to inform You.'[1]

As a result of his intensely energetic efforts, Shri Saubhagyabhai was able to attain increasingly higher spiritual states and ultimately reached a state of unprecedented Samadhi. At 10.50 in the morning on Thursday, Jeth Vad 10 of V.S. 1953, Shri Saubhagyabhai left his mortal body. At the time of Shri Saubhagyabhai's unprecedented passing away in a state of Samadhi, intuitively realising this at

1- 'Shri Sobhag Pratye', page 316

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the same moment, Shrimad, clad as He was, took a cold water bath. The telegram informing Him of the passing reached Him a few hours later!

About Shri Saubhagyabhai's passing away, Shrimad writes:

'This is how the soul is associated with the body. In spite of this, since time immemorial, on leaving the body, one continues to grieve. Because of the powerful effect of delusion, the soul identifies itself with the body, and this is the main seed of cycles of birth and death. Shri Saubhagya has supremely benefited himself while renouncing such a body in state of steadfast abidance in the soul, which is difficult even for great renunciates.

In this land, at this time, I wish again and again that I can find such a rare person as Shri Saubhagya...

A true aspirant should never forget Shri Saubhagya...

Shri Saubhagya's simplicity, firm spiritual understanding and supreme benevolence towards other seekers are just a few of His virtues that should be reflected upon over and over again.'[1]

1- 'Shrimad Rajchandra', 6th edition, page 606, (Patrank-782)

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This letter is indicative of the special place that Shri Saubhagyabhai held in Shrimad's heart. He was intimately linked with Shrimad's spiritual life, woven into it, which proved to be mutually beneficial. Shri Saubhagyabhai had the capacity to understand Shrimad's heart, which clearly illustrates his advanced spiritual state. The world will ever remain indebted to Shri Saubhagyabhai for being instrumental in bringing out the very best spiritual letters, which reflect Shrimad's heart and 'Shri Atmasiddhi Shastra', which is filled with spiritual secrets. Shri Saubhagyabhai was largely responsible for unearthing the vast mysteries of spirituality buried in Shrimad's heart. Blessed with the absolute fortune of being Shrimad's supreme follower, the crown jewel amongst the devotees and His spiritual soulmate – true seekers will be forever grateful to Shri Saubhagyabhai for the unparalleled benevolence he has bestowed upon them.

(iii) Shri Ambalalbhai Lalchandbhai

Shri Ambalalbhai was a great aspirant who fulfilled his life by serving Shrimad till the very end with single-pointed devotion. A native of Khambhat, Shri Ambalalbhai was born in V.S. 1926. His father was Shri Maganlalbhai. His maternal grandfather, Shri Lalchandbhai, did not have a son, and so he adopted Shri Ambalalbhai. Raised under his maternal grandfather's care, he became known as

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Shri Ambalalbhai

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Shri Ambalal Lalchand. Shri Ambalalbhai was two years younger than Shrimad. He was religious and had a spirit to serve. Through him, many aspirants had the good fortune of meeting Shrimad. A loyal devotee, selfless in service, possessing praiseworthy intelligence and firm dispassion, his close and constant association with Shrimad enabled him to attain an elevated spiritual state.

Shri Manekchandbhai's sons Shri Chhotalalbhai, Shri Sundarlalbhai and Shri Tribhuvanbhai were Shri Ambalalbhai's friends and belonged to the same community. In V.S. 1945 in the month of Vaishakh, Shri Ambalalbhai and Shri Chhotalalbhai went to Ahmedabad to attend a wedding, where they met Shri Juthabhai, who was about the same age. Just as the marriage procession was to commence, Shri Ambalalbhai and some others went to call Shri Juthabhai to join the procession. At that time, Shri Juthabhai, who had shown signs of detachment from a very young age, was reading Shrimad's letters and remarked, "Must I stop?" This detachment struck a chord with Shri Ambalalbhai. Instantly, he sat down, wanting to learn more. Shri Juthabhai gloriously sang Shrimad's praises and gave him Shrimad's letters to read. Upon reading these letters, Shri Ambalalbhai's soul, deep-rooted with spirituality, felt a desire to personally meet Shrimad. He also copied the letters for deeper contemplation upon them.

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Thus, although the first meeting was on account of a wedding, the real catalyst for Shri Ambalalbhai's spiritual fervour was Shri Juthabhai. Upon returning to Khambhat, he wrote five or six letters to Shrimad, seeking permission to meet Him personally. When he was finally granted permission, he left for Mumbai with Shri Tribhuvanbhai, and met Shrimad. Thereafter, Shri Tribhuvanbhai returned to Mumbai alone. At that time, Shrimad wrote a letter comprising of 10 points that elaborated upon 'who is worthy of Mahavira's teachings' and sent it for Shri Ambalalbhai.[1] Thereafter, in V.S. 1946, on Aso Vad 12 Shrimad came to Khambhat from Sayla on Shri Ambalalbhai's request and graced his home. Shri Ambalalbhai's devout heart was overwhelmed with joy and he drenched himself totally in devotion for Shrimad. During Shrimad's stay in Khambhat, Shri Lalchandbhai took Shrimad to the Sthanakvasi Upashray, where Shri Lalluji and other monks met Shrimad for the first time.

After their meeting in V.S. 1946, Shri Ambalalbhai's life revolved around Shrimad. He curtailed his business activities considerably and changed the course of his life – steering it towards the path of liberation. When he was just 24 years old, he generously donated his land and farm to the poor

1- 'Shrimad Rajchandra', 6th edition, page 210 (Patrank-105)

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farmers – his heart was coloured with noble thoughts of renunciation and detachment. He was previously the secretary of a Jain school and well-known as the leader of the Sthanakvasi sect owing to his work efficiency. After meeting Shrimad, however, he spent most of his time in scriptural studies and worship in accordance with the guidance showered by Shrimad. Shri Tribhuvanbhai, Shri Chhotalalbhai and other devoted aspirants met on a daily basis for spiritual study and Shri Ambalalbhai ardently extolled Shrimad's transcendental state and extraordinary character, which elevated everyone in devotion and strengthened their faith in the Enlightened One.

Since Shrimad was a householder, the Sthanakvasi community disapproved of Shri Ambalalbhai accepting Him as his Guru. During these trying times, Shrimad imparted wisdom to Shri Ambalalbhai to help him remain undisturbed and deeply-rooted on the spiritual path. Through Shrimad's guidance, Shri Ambalalbhai's worthiness blossomed. Remaining aloof from differences of opinion, he involved himself in spiritual pursuits. He received Shrimad's direct association in Khambhat, Ralaj, Kavitha, Vadva, Virsad, Kansari, Undel, Anand, Kheda, Nadiad, Mumbai, Uttarsanda, Vavania, Wadhwan, Ahmedabad, Petlad and other places. This drenched him in such devotion that He would tirelessly sing the glory of Shrimad's virtues all night long. On

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returning home after meeting Shrimad, he would be so grief-stricken by the pangs of separation that he would pledge vows such as celibacy and the like. Having a flair for poetry, he has composed many beautiful verses describing Shrimad's greatness. At Shrimad's behest, he learnt Sanskrit from a pundit and created a devotional verse in praise of Shrimad, which he chanted day and night:

'Maha devyaha kukshiratnam,
shabdajit ravatmajam;
Rajchandramaham vande,
tattvalochan dayakam.'

I bow to Shrimad Rajchandra, the master of words, the jewel born of the womb of great divinity, the son of Ravjibhai and provider of spiritual eyesight.

During the 11 year span from V.S. 1946 to V.S. 1957, Shrimad and Shri Ambalalbhai corresponded regularly. Shrimad has written close to 127 letters to Shri Ambalalbhai, of which most are short. However, 15-20 letters are quite extensive. In the letters written to Shri Ambalalbhai, in some He has offered guidance while in others He has described either His inner state or external entanglements and expressed His desire to remain silent about the spiritual path. Besides this, there are discussions on several spiritual topics, such as the importance of the instructions of an Enlightened One, the rarity

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of spiritual discourses, the vagaries of karma, the power of faith, the characteristics of an aspirant, inadvertence on the spiritual path, the state of enlightenment and so on. Some letters provide a detailed explanation to queries like, why the desire for liberation does not arise, the importance of the five great vows etc. Shrimad has guided Shri Ambalalbhai on all these issues, which is a reflection of his keen intellect in spiritual matters. Due to this indirect association through letters and direct association during Shrimad's retreats, within a short time Shri Ambalalbhai accepted Shrimad as his Sadguru and became His most humble disciple.

Shri Ambalalbhai was very competent in his work, obedient and soul-focused. He spent his life following Shrimad's instructions. He sought Shrimad's guidance in all matters and implemented it. In a very short time, he began managing the activities of Shrimad's mission of the upliftment of the spiritual path. Every letter written by Shrimad was taken from the recipient and copied by Shri Ambalalbhai according to Shrimad's instructions. He would copy the letter in a notebook in beautiful handwriting, which can be likened to a string of beautiful pearls, and dispatch it to the concerned person, as per instructions from Shrimad. Moreover, he would copy very important texts written in Sanskrit, Prakrit, Hindi and other languages and send them to seekers

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as per Shrimad's commands. He did all of this with great zeal and focus, during his daily practice of samayik. Thus, Shrimad's teachings and scriptures were imparted to the aspirants by Shri Ambalalbhai.

When Shrimad was in retreat, Shri Ambalalbhai served Him sincerely, through his body, mind and wealth. He would personally cook Shrimad's food and undertake various other tasks, too. Besides this, he would organise the lodging and boarding for all the disciples who came to visit Shrimad. Sometimes, he would be so engrossed in serving Shrimad that he would be oblivious to his family, which saddened them greatly. When this came to Shrimad's notice, He dismissed Shri Ambalalbhai from His personal service, saying, "Satisfy them. Make them understand your position one way or another. Accomplish your spiritual pursuits while keeping them happy. Do not hurt them."[1] Shri Ambalalbhai's love for spirituality had made him careless towards his social obligations, causing distress to others, so Shrimad cautioned and guided him thus. Thereafter, Shri Ambalalbhai never repeated this oversight.

Considering service and obedience as his life's mission, such a jewel of a devotee, Shri Ambalalbhai, won everyone over with his sincere love and respect. In spite of being extraordinarily competent, he was

1- 'Updeshamrut', 4th edition, page 278

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totally devoid of pride or pompousness. Humility and politeness came naturally to him. This kindled such powers in him that he could write Shrimad's sermons verbatim even eight days after He had given them. His reproductions of Shrimad's sermons in Kavitha, Ralaj, Vadva, Anand and other places in V.S. 1952 have been published in the text 'Shrimad Rajchandra' under the heading 'Updeshchhaya'. It was Shri Ambalalbhai who had stood with the lantern at dusk in Nadiad on Aso Vad 1 in V.S. 1952 when 'Shri Atmasiddhi Shastra' was composed. The brief explanations of 'Shri Atmasiddhi Shastra' published in 'Shrimad Rajchandra', were also written by Shri Ambalalbhai, and had been seen by Shrimad Himself at a later date.

In V.S. 1955 on the hills of Idar, Shrimad told 7 monks, including Shri Lalluji Muni, "Ambalal's disposition and state have become slack due to indolence and greed. For the past 12 months, I knew that these faults would manifest within him." Shri Lalluji Muni expressed remorse upon hearing this. At that time, Shrimad said, "Muni, do not be distressed. A leaf drifting in a flowing river becomes entangled in a web, but eventually, by the powerful flow of the river, the leaf becomes untangled from that web and merges into the great ocean. Likewise, Shri Ambalalbhai's inadvertence will be obliterated by my preaching and he will attain the Supreme State."

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Exactly what Shrimad had said about Shri Ambalalbhai took place. In V.S. 1957, in Ahmedabad as a result of unprecedented showers of wisdom, Shri Ambalalbhai attained the rare experience of self-realisation. Before His passing, Shrimad had disclosed to Shri Dharshibhai that Shri Ambalalbhai had attained the unprecedented state of self-realisation.

In V.S. 1957 during the months of Maha-Fagan, Shri Ambalalbhai and his younger brother Shri Nagindas Maganlal stayed in Wadhwan, where they remained in Shrimad's service for a month. After that, Shrimad asked them to return. Following His instructions, they left for Khambhat. Shrimad passed away that very year, in the month of Chaitra. Shri Ambalalbhai was grief-stricken beyond endurance when he heard of Shrimad's passing. Later, Shri Ambalalbhai assisted Shrimad's younger brother Shri Mansukhbhai in collecting all of Shrimad's works and publishing them in a volume entitled 'Shrimad Rajchandra'. In this way, he tried to repay what little he could of the indebtednesses that he felt towards this Great Soul. The first edition of 'Shrimad Rajchandra' was published in the year V.S. 1961.

Thus, until the end of his life, this exceptional devotee of Shrimad galvanised his strength in spreading spirituality and serving with devotion.

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He had promised Samadhimaran to Shri Chhotalal Kapurchand, an aspirant from Fenav, so when he was afflicted with the plague, unmindful of his own physical well-being, Shri Ambalalbhai, along with Shri Naginbhai and Shri Popatbhai, served him right until his last moments. Ultimately, they all contracted the plague. Shri Ambalalbhai fearlessly maintained soul-awareness right until the end of his life. He came to know of his impending death a month prior and divulged it to his wife Parsanben. The last four to five days of his life were spent in acute pain, but he maintained exemplary equipoise. Uttering 'Sahajatmaswaroop Hey Prabhu' with his last breath, on Chaitra Vad 12 in V.S. 1963 when he was barely 37 years old he left his mortal body in Khambhat in a state of complete awareness of the Self.

(iv) Shri Lalluji Muni

Lalluji Muni, whom Shrimad called 'Muni of the fourth era', became an ardent devotee of Shrimad and soared to great spiritual heights, guiding others to do the same. In spite of being initiated as a Sthanakvasi monk, he surrendered his entire life to Shrimad, and though he had to undergo much suffering, he displayed exemplary devotion towards his Guru and practised rigorous sadhana to uplift his soul. Both directly through personal interaction and indirectly through correspondence, Shrimad steered

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Shri Lalluji Muni

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Shri Lalluji Muni along the right spiritual path. Accordingly, by following this path, he attained self-realisation. Shri Lalluji Muni devoted his entire life in making the common man realise Shrimad's true identity. He also inspired the establishment of 'Shrimad Rajchandra Ashram, Agas'. During his long life as a renunciate, the credit of spreading Shrimad's virtues and writings far and wide through personal interaction primarily goes to none other than him.

Shri Lalluji Muni was born in Vataman, a village in the Bhal region of Gujarat, on Aso Vad 1 of V.S. 1910 in a reputed Bhavsar family. His father's name was Shri Krishnadas and mother was Kasliba. His father passed away before his birth. The only child of four mothers, he was brought up with great love. He married twice at a young age, but had no children. Then, quite suddenly, he contracted anaemia. He sought numerous different treatments, but all failed to cure him. Seeking solace from his religious upbringing, he resolved to renounce the world if he recovered. He did recover, and was eager to renounce the world, but his mother wanted him to have a child before she would permit renunciation. Thereafter, he had a son, and when the child turned one month old, Shri Lalluji Muni and his neighbourhood friend, Shri Devkaranji, were initiated by a monk from the Sthanakvasi sect, Shri

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Harakhchandji Muni, in V.S. 1940 in Khambhat.

After renunciation, Shri Lalluji Muni studied the scriptures and taught them to others. He fasted every other day. This intense effort and humility endeared him to his Guru and his fellow monks, but he did not feel the spiritual peace that he had expected; even while reading the scriptures, he found no satisfactory explanation for the questions that arose in his mind. Five years elapsed in this state. In the midst of this state of discontentment, he heard about Shrimad from Shri Ambalalbhai and had the opportunity to read His letters. A ray of hope was born within him, and Shri Lalluji Muni was eager to meet Shrimad.

In V.S. 1946, Shrimad visited Khambhat during Diwali. On the auspicious day of Dhanteras, Shri Ambalalbhai and his father Shri Lalchandbhai, reverently escorted Shrimad to the upashray. There, honouring Shri Harakhchandji Maharaj's request, Shrimad demonstrated His avdhan skills. Shri Harakhchandji Maharaj discussed a few scriptures with Shrimad and on that basis, greatly praised Him. Everyone was spellbound by Shrimad's unique prowess. Upon taking permission from his Guru, Shri Lalluji Muni met Shrimad alone. Though Shri Lalluji Muni was 14 years older than Shrimad and an avowed renunciate, he unhesitatingly and reverently prostrated himself thrice in front of Shrimad, a

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young 22-year-old householder, and expressed his desire for enlightenment and firmness in celibacy. Shrimad remained silent for some time. Then, He extended Shri Lalluji Muni's right foot towards Him and studied the big toe, looking for a particular sign. On His way home, He told Shri Ambalalbhai that Shri Lalluji Muni was a virtuous man. Shrimad stayed at Shri Ambalalbhai's residence in Khambhat for seven days. Every day, Shri Lalluji Muni would go there and benefit from meeting Him in solitude. In his own mind, he consecrated Shrimad as his spiritual Guru.

Shrimad stayed in Khambhat for about a week and then proceeded to Mumbai. After that, through Shri Ambalalbhai, Shri Lalluji Muni regularly corresponded with Shrimad to enrich his spiritual understanding. Presently, there are 92 letters available, which were written by Shrimad to Shri Lalluji Muni. Most of them are written elaborately. The letters addressed to him elaborate upon various topics, including: the understanding of scriptural studies, Shrimad's opinions on certain scriptures, guidance regarding a monk's conduct, introduction to Shrimad's internal state, the secret of the path to liberation and others. These letters aimed to augment detachment in Shri Lalluji Muni, firmly stabilise him in the five great vows, free him from the bondage of wilfulness – which is a hindrance,

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let go of sectarian bias, increase soul-awareness, and attain a state of equanimity sans likes and dislikes. As a result of this correspondence, Shri Lalluji Muni became firmly rooted in the spiritual path and girded himself with the resolve to dedicate his entire life in following Shrimad's commands.

Since Shri Lalluji Muni was a monk, so when he accepted Shrimad, a householder, as his Guru, it created opposition from his own sect and the traditionalists, who created a lot of difficulties for him. Nevertheless, Shri Lalluji Muni calmly bore the suffering they inflicted upon him, without deviating even slightly from the path of Truth that he had adopted. In fact, the more difficulties came his way, the more his devotion for Shrimad intensified.

Being a monk, it was extremely difficult for Shri Lalluji Muni to personally meet Shrimad. In order to meet Shrimad more often, he spent the four monsoon months of V.S. 1949 in the upashray at Chinchpokli, in Mumbai. Shri Lalluji Muni visited Shrimad every day for about an hour, absorbing His teachings in solitude. This brought him a great feeling of fulfilment. Shrimad explained the first 17 couplets of 'Samadhishatak' to Shri Lalluji Muni and instructed him to read the complete scripture, inscribing 'Atambhavna bhavta jiva lahe kevaljnan re' on the first page of the book. Often times, Shrimad would advise Lalluji Muni to observe

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silence. Once the four monsoon months of V.S. 1949 ended, Munishri went into silence for a period of three years. He only allowed himself to speak when he needed to convey essential information to the monks or ask Shrimad questions regarding spiritual matters. During this period, he undertook an in-depth study of the scripture 'Samadhishatak'.

Lalluji Muni spent the four monsoon months of V.S. 1950 and 1951 in Surat. At that time, his body was inflicted with disease and he had requested Shrimad to grant him self-realisation before he died. In response, Shrimad wrote the 'Chha Padno Patra' (Patrank-493) and sent it to his Surat address with instructions to memorise it. Later, when Shrimad visited Surat, He explained to Shri Lalluji Muni the deep spiritual significance of the letter. Munishri perceived the tremendous importance of this letter and referred to it as the 'miraculous letter'.

Munishri spent the four monsoon months of V.S. 1952 in Khambhat. Shrimad was in retreat in Ralaj during Paryushan. Being so close to Khambat and yet not being able to meet Him was a cause of unbearable grief for Munishri. When he could no longer bear the separation, he travelled to the outskirts of Ralaj to meet Shrimad, however, he did not receive permission to meet Him. He returned to Khambhat, tears streaming down his face. The next day, Shrimad sent Munishri a mantra through

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Shri Saubhagyabhai, which he internalised, kindling every pore of his being with it. A few days later, Shrimad went to Vadva, near Khambhat. For a week, He regularly spent time with the seven monks, including Shri Lalluji Muni. Finding the garb of a monk a great hindrance to his continuous association with Shrimad, Shri Lalluji Muni, with tears in his eyes, discarded his 'muhapatti'. But Shrimad asked another monk to give it back to him, saying that there was still a need for Shri Lalluji Muni to wear it. At the end of the same year, Shrimad composed 'Shri Atmasiddhi Shastra' in Nadiad and sent a copy of it to Shri Lalluji Muni for his in-depth contemplation in solitude. Accordingly, Munishri would go far off into the wilderness, sit in a secluded place to memorise it and reflect upon the meaning of the couplets. Doing so, he would feel an unprecedented reverence for it, a surging enthusiasm in his soul.

In V.S. 1954, Shri Lalluji Muni spent the four monsoon months in Vaso. At that time, Shrimad had spent one month with the monks, retreating with them into the forests and providing them with deep insights through His spiritual discourses. On the last day in Vaso, Shrimad imparted His wisdom upon Shri Lalluji Muni for one hour, transforming his attachment for Him into an unswerving focus on the soul. That is to say that on that day, Munishri

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attained self-realisation. In V.S. 1955, Shrimad spent five days with the monks in the hills and jungles of Idar, giving divine sermons on 'Bruhad Dravyasangrah' and kindling soul-awareness within them. The same year, Shrimad blessed them with an entire day of spiritual discourses in Naroda.

In V.S. 1957 in Ahmedabad, during their very last meeting, Shrimad had told Shri Lalluji Muni, "Do not differentiate between me and the Dispassionate Ones." He then imparted the following invaluable advice, "Muni, these are extremely trying times. Therefore, remain indifferent like Jadbharat; cross over all the miraculous powers that will manifest. Souls in this age are like ripe cucumbers – they will not be able to endure strictness. Therefore, if you are lenient and become their saviour, many souls will be uplifted by you."[1]

The news that Shrimad had passed away on Chaitra Vad 5 in V.S. 1957 was received by Munishri in Kavitha the next morning. Upon hearing this, having fasted the previous day, he observed another fast without food and water, remaining in kayotsarg in the jungle outside the village. In a state of deep devotion, he remained in solitude for the entire day.

After Shrimad's passing, Munishri spent the four monsoon months at various places, including

1- 'Updeshamrut', 4th edition, preface, page 62

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Karmala in the south, Vadali in the north and other places in Charotar district and nearby areas. Between V.S. 1957 and V.S. 1975, he spent the monsoon months in Vaso, Karmala, Naroda, Dhandhuka, Vadali, Kheralu, Borsad, Palitana, Khambhat, Nadiad, Junagadh, Bagsara, Nar and Simarda areas, bringing together many followers in devotion for Shrimad. In V.S. 1968, on the seashore of Khambhat, he spent 19 days and nights in continuous bhakti, drenching many souls in devotion.

In V.S. 1976 in the village of Sandesar, there was an 8-day celebration to commemorate Shrimad Rajchandra's birth anniversary on Kartik Sud Purnima. For the occasion, Shri Lalluji Muni had also come to Sandesar after spending the four monsoon months in Simarda. Enthusiastic devotion ensued in his presence. During this celebration, Shri Jijibhai Kuberdas of Sandesar was so enthused that he offered a 7.5 acre farm to Shri Lalluji Muni for the purpose of consecrating an ashram. To be blessed by his continuous association, on Jeth Sud 5 in V.S. 1976, the ashram was established upon this farmland near Agas Railway Station.

As counselled by Shrimad, with a generous heart, broad vision and compassion for all beings, Shri Lalluji Muni explained Shrimad's wisdom to the simple-hearted people of Charotar, in everyday language, through the means of the ashram. Through

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Munishri's letters, sermons, conduct – a person could understand one fact: that 'Shrimad is the true Guru, and by having faith in Him, one will be free from transmigrations'. Once when he was in Pune for the four monsoon months, he reinforced seekers' faith in Shrimad, making each one pledge that 'on the behest of a saint, I abide by Krupalu Dev's commands.' In this way, he directed them along the right path. On account of his humility, simplicity, calmness, detachment, joyous nature and unparalleled devotion for Shrimad, Munishri received tremendous respect from people. While imparting sermons, Munishri focused on everybody's pure state, and big or small, male or female, he addressed everyone as 'Prabhu'. Thus, he came to be known as 'Prabhushri'. Since he always conducted himself as if he were Shri Raj's servant's servant, he also came to be known as 'Shri Laghuraj Swami'.

For the benefit of spiritual aspirants, he spent the monsoon months of 14 years in the ashram; as a result, many souls were blessed by his unprecedented association and wisdom. Chief amongst them, Brahmachariji Shri Govardhandasji had acquired a very high spiritual state.

Once the ashram was established, except for Sanawad and Pune, Shri Lalluji Muni spent all the remaining monsoon months there. During the remaining eight months of the year, he would travel

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to Pethapur, Navsari, Surat, Abu, Nasik and other places, colouring everyone with the vivid hues of devotion and spiritual discourses. His aged and ailing body did not support him in the least, but he remained indifferent towards it. He would say, "Let death come, let ailments come, let happiness come, let sadness come, let whatever that wants to come, come; but that is not my dharma. My dharma is to know, to witness and remain steady. All else is matter, matter and matter. Vertigo, fainting, shortness of breath – it is fun to witness all of these things while maintaining a distance from the body!"[1]

Thus, detached and revelling in the Self, he was totally prepared to leave the body. As a consequence of lifelong spiritual pursuits, in V.S. 1992, on the night of Vaishakh Sud 8, at ten minutes past eight, Munishri left his mortal body in the Agas Ashram in a state of unprecedented samadhi. During his long life, he revealed Shrimad's true identity to many souls. By following his precepts and settling in Agas Ashram, many devotees were able to uplift their souls, and are continuing to do so, even today.

(v) Mahatma Gandhiji

The relationship between Shrimad and Mahatma Gandhiji (who was about one and three quarter years younger than Shrimad) is significant not just

1- 'Updeshamrut', 4th edition, page 258

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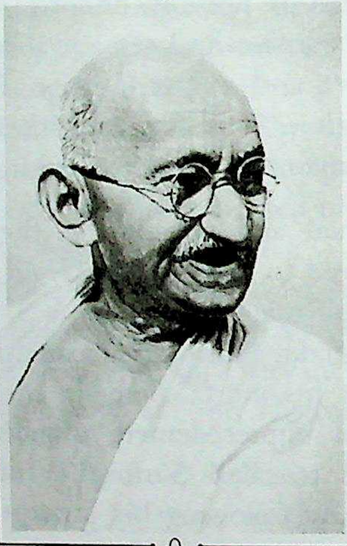

Mahatma Gandhiji

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in their lives and the history of Gujarat, but it is also a resplendent chapter in the nation's cultural, political and spiritual history. Gandhiji's herculean efforts to free the nation by observing the path of ahimsa (non-violence) and satyagraha, brought about a non-violent revolution that culminated in India's independence. These results are an unparalleled testimony to the greatness of non-violence, self restraint and austerity. The established and powerful scientific principles of truth and non-violence, as propounded by Shrimad, were integrally woven within the foundations of that great man through contact with Him and the unfailing guidance He provided.

Shrimad's direct interaction with Gandhiji and His letters to him – both played a pivotal role in shaping Gandhiji's character. Absorbing boundless inspiration from Shrimad, Gandhiji adopted the principles of non-violence, truth, celibacy, limited possessions, austerity and others. As a result of their special spiritual relationship, ongoing for several years, it is Shrimad whom Gandhiji trusted and turned to in times of spiritual crisis. Since Gandhiji spent a lot of time abroad and was so occupied by his political involvements, Gandhiji did not benefit from his association with Shrimad as much as he could have. Yet, whatever acquaintance he had of Shrimad was enough for him to develop very high

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esteem for Him. In Gandhiji's autobiography, in the chapters 'Raychandbhai', 'Religious Ferment', 'Comparative study of religions', 'Brahmacharya' and in his other writings and speeches, one can clearly discern that Gandhiji's heart was overflowing with faith in Shrimad. Amongst the three great men whom Gandhiji considered as his guides (Shrimad, Ruskin and Tolstoy), he placed Shrimad at the forefront. Gandhiji describes the impact Shrimad had on him as follows:

'I had come in closest personal touch with him. His judgement appealed to my moral sense in the vast majority of cases. The bedrock of his faith was unquestionably ahimsa. His ahimsa, if it included the tiniest insect, also covered the whole of humanity.'[1]

In the month of Jeth in V.S. 1947 when Gandhiji returned to India after qualifying as a barrister, he stayed at the home of Shrimad's father-in-law's brother Dr. Pranjivandas Mehta. Shrimad was also invited there the same day. Introducing Him, Dr. Pranjivandas said, 'He is a poet, yet He is with us in business. He is Enlightened and a shatavdhani.' After a brief conversation with Shrimad, Gandhiji was awestruck by His personality and drawn to His loving nature. The importance that he placed on foreign lands was soon deflated. Meeting Shrimad

1- 'Modern Review', June 1930

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completely dispelled his notion that one had to go abroad to acquire knowledge. After witnessing the 23-year-old Shrimad's avdhan powers, extraordinary memory, righteousness and values, Gandhiji began to idolise His qualities.

After returning to India, Gandhiji stayed in Mumbai for 2 years to practise law. He had a considerable amount of free time, so he frequented Shrimad's office to meet Him and posed many questions, which Shrimad resolved most convincingly. During these visits, Gandhiji would observe His mannerisms very minutely. As their acquaintance grew deeper, Gandhiji developed increasingly greater respect for Shrimad. Watching Shrimad sitting in His jewellery shop, handling diamonds and pearls in such a detached manner, Gandhiji has written:

'Raychandbhai's commercial transactions covered hundreds of thousands. He was a connoisseur of pearls and diamonds. No knotty business problem was too difficult for him. But all these things were not the centre round which his life revolved. That centre was the passion to see God face to face. Amongst the things on his business table there were invariably to be found some religious book and his diary. The moment he finished his business he opened the religious book or the diary. Much of his published writings is a reproduction from this

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diary. The man who, immediately on finishing his talk about weighty business transaction, began to write about the hidden things of the spirit could evidently not be a businessman at all, but a real seeker after Truth. And I saw him thus absorbed in godly pursuits in the midst of business, not once or twice, but very often. I never saw him lose his state of equipoise.'[1]

Disappointed by his failure as a solicitor in Mumbai, Gandhiji left for Rajkot. At that time, a Muslim businessman from Porbandar named Abdullah Sheth offered to retain Gandhiji as a paid solicitor for a business matter involving his office in Africa. Accepting the offer, Gandhiji left for Africa in the summer of V.S. 1949. There, he successfully conducted his job, mediating a settlement between both parties. In doing so, he acquired a fine reputation for himself and became quite popular. His Muslim and Christian friends there put forth their religious beliefs to Gandhiji. Insisting that their religion was superior, they instigated him to convert to their faith. Gandhiji appreciated certain virtues of his Christian friends, so he began to get attracted to Christianity. Besides this, at the back of his mind, he felt that Hinduism was incomplete and propagated certain undesirable practises, which

1- Mahatma Gandhiji, 'The story of my experiments with truth', part-2, chapter 'Raychandbhai', page 82-83

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induced in him a desire to convert. But he decided that he would not forsake Hinduism without first understanding it in its entirety.

During this period of spiritual crisis, he wrote to Shrimad and put forth his dilemmas. From Africa, he wrote a letter in which he posed a total of 27 questions to Shrimad, enquiring upon various subjects including: the soul, karma, moksh or liberation, God and His creating the world, Veda, Geeta, animal sacrificial rites, reincarnation, devotion, the end of the world, what to do when a snake threatens to bite you and so on. Shrimad responded to each question with a methodical, lucid and logical answer that was in accordance with dharma. Along with these answers, He recommended that Gandhiji study texts such as 'Panchikaran', 'Maniratnamala', the chapter on aspirants in 'Yogvasistha', 'Shaddarshansamucchay', 'Mokshmala' and others. Gandhiji studied them all, and as a result, his doubts were dispelled and he was satisfied. Shrimad's timely guidance averted Gandhiji from converting. Regarding this, Gandhiji has written:

'The result was that I became peaceful. My mind was convinced that whatever I was seeking could be found in Hinduism. Raychandbhai is responsible for bringing about this change, so the reader can have some inkling of the

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great extent to which my respect for Him must have increased.'[1]

Correspondence with Shrimad had such an uplifting effect on Gandhiji. If it were not for Shrimad's spiritual guidance, Gandhiji would have returned from Africa as 'Michael, or 'Mohammed', but certainly not as 'Mohandas'. Besides this long letter to Gandhiji, two more letters written by Shrimad are available. One of them emphasises the need to understand the Six Fundamentals pertaining to the Soul and the other discusses the question of the importance of caste system from various angles. While in Africa, a question arose in Gandhiji's mind about whether it was appropriate to eat at the homes of his Christian and Muslim friends. Gandhiji posed this question to Shrimad in a third letter. In His response, Shrimad elaborates extensively on what constitutes a morally correct code of conduct and beliefs, the Aryan and non-Aryan countries, discriminating between what is considered edible and what is not from a religious standpoint, the importance of the four divisions of society and the four stages of life, right social norms and so on. Even though these three letters were written specifically to one person, they can benefit all.

1- 'Shrimad Rajchandra ane Gandhiji', edited by Shri Mukulbhai Kalarthi, page 43

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After handling Abdullah Sheth's case, Gandhiji began practising law in Africa. He initiated a fight against the prevalent injustice against the Indians and provided free legal representation for them. He returned to India in the summer of V.S. 1952, where he consolidated the cooperation of the Indians in an effort to perpetuate systematic resistance. He remained occupied with giving speeches, discussions with political leaders, publishing newsletters and other pursuits. Upon receiving a telegram from Durban, he returned to Africa in the winter of V.S. 1953. Shrimad was in retreat in Gujarat during the six months that Gandhiji was in India, and hence, they could not meet. Gandhiji's occasional correspondence with Shrimad continued from Africa. Before Gandhiji returned to India in the summer of V.S. 1957, he had already received the news of Shrimad's passing.[1] When he returned

1- Dated 21-5-1901 (A.D.) on that day, from 14 Mercury Lane, Durban, he had written to Shri Revashankarbhai:

'Respected Bhai Revashankar,

I received Bhai Shri Mansukhlal's letter informing me of Kavishri's demise. Later, I read the news in the papers, too. It is unbelievable. I am unable to forget it...Wrong or right, I was deeply attached to Him and very emotional about Him. All of that is gone. I am crying for my own selfish reasons. At such a time, how can I possibly offer my condolences?'

-'Gandhiji's writings', part 3, page 218

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to India, during his first visit to Rajkot, he went straight from the railway station to the memorial of his inspiration, Shrimad. He visited Shrimad's family and he became friends with His brother, Shri Mansukhbhai. With the intent to start his practice in Mumbai, he bought an office in Churchgate and a home in Santacruz. But the situation in Africa did not improve, so when he received a telegram from there in V.S. 1958, Gandhiji returned to Africa once again, carrying some of Shrimad's compositions, including a copy of 'Shri Atmasiddhi Shastra.'

In V.S. 1960, Gandhiji established an ashram in Phoenix, near Durban, and settled there with his family. In V.S. 1962, in the presence of the people of Phoenix, Gandhiji and his wife undertook a vow of lifelong celibacy. Gandhiji has written in his autobiography, in the chapter entitled 'Brahmacharya', that it was Shrimad's influence that had led him to make this decision. He writes: **'But it was in South Africa that I came to realize the importance of observing brahmacharya even with respect to my wife. I cannot definitely say what circumstance or what book it was, that set my thoughts in that direction, but I have a recollection that the predominant factor was the influence of Raychandbhai.'**[1] To fortify his vow

1- Mahatma Gandhiji, 'The story of my experiments with truth' part 3, chapter 'Brahmacharya-1' page 187

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of lifelong celibacy, Gandhiji often read Shrimad's composition on that subject, entitled 'Nirkhine Navyauvana'.

In V.S. 1962 Gandhiji was sent to London to put forward the plight of the Indians in South Africa. At that time, he carried some letters that Shrimad had written to him as well as his English translation of 'Shri Atmasiddhi Shastra', but this bundle of papers was accidentally left behind in a bus. Shrimad had written many letters to Gandhiji; it is certain that there were a considerable number of letters because Gandhiji has mentioned in his autobiography that he had corresponded with Shrimad right until the end.[1] Gandhiji carried Shrimad's letters and compositions with him, and reflected upon them time and time again.

Gandhiji stayed in South Africa until the Indians were victorious in their struggle. He returned to India in V.S. 1972 and for 30 years thereafter, he spearheaded the cause of Indian independence, initiating satyagraha, khadi, abolishment of untouchability, and other such activities, which were based on the foundation of truth and non-violence. Even during those times, he would often remember

1- Mahatma Gandhiji, 'The story of my experiments with truth' part 2, chapter 'Religious ferment', page 128

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Shrimad. He was present during the celebration of 'Shrimad Rajchandra Jayanti' in Rajkot and Wadhwan. Whenever he stayed in the Kochrab Ashram near Ahmedabad and later in the Sabarmati Ashram, he would organise a public gathering on Kartik Purnima to celebrate Shrimad's birth anniversary. In his speeches commemorating the occasion, he mentioned Shrimad's benevolence towards him and publicly acknowledged his indebtedness to Shrimad.

Shri Revashankar Jagjivanbhai had requested Gandhiji to write the preface for the second edition of 'Shrimad Rajchandra' published by the 'Paramshrut Prabhavak Mandal' in V.S. 1982. Gandhiji agreed, and finished writing the last incomplete chapter of the memoirs on Shrimad, which he had started writing while he was jailed in Yerwada. He also included some new material and prepared an article entitled, 'Some recollections of Raychandbhai', in which he extensively extolled Shrimad. He has also dedicated an entire chapter, 'Raychandbhai', of his autobiography to Him. By reading this chapter, people all over the world have become acquainted with Shrimad.

As a result of Gandhiji's relentless efforts, India attained Independence on the first Shravan Vad 14 of V.S. 2003. The Hindu - Muslim riots reached

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their peak during this time. After quieting the riots in Bengal, Gandhiji went to Delhi to try to establish peace there. On Friday, Posh Vad 5 in V.S. 2004, while Gandhiji was going to his evening prayer assembly, a young man named Nathuram Godse fired at him. Gandhiji embraced death with the name of Rama on his lips.

Thus, we can see the important role that Shrimad's conduct and wisdom played in inspiring several seekers to progress along the spiritual path. It is easy to see how Shrimad's association completely transformed them, realigning their lives onto the right path. Those who came in contact with Him were indeed the truly fortunate ones.

Though Shrimad's mortal body is not amidst us, His writing shines forth brightly, like the blazing flame of knowledge, guiding and directing spiritual aspirants. To awaken all true seekers, the amazing treasury of knowledge - His invaluable literature - is available in the text 'Shrimad Rajchandra', which, even today, benevolently guides spiritual aspirants and quenches their thirst for knowledge.

Many ashrams and temples dedicated to Shrimad have been established to avail of the benefits of Shrimad's writings - to peacefully read and reflect upon them, thoroughly study and practise them.

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Institutions within India Associated with Shrimad Rajchandraji's Divine Name[1]

NO.	TOWN, STATE	INSTITUTIONS
ASHRAMS		
1	Agas, Gujarat	Shri Sanatan Jain Dharma Shrimad Rajchandra Ashram
2	Bandhani, Gujarat	Shrimad Rajchandra Gnan Mandir
3	Bhadran, Gujarat	Shrimad Rajchandra Ashram
4	Delhi	Shrimad Rajchandra Spiritual Retreat Centre
5	Deolali, Maharashtra	Shrimad Rajchandra Swadhyay Mandir
6	Dhaman, Gujarat	Shrimad Rajchandra Ashram
7	Dharampur, Gujarat	Shrimad Rajchandra Ashram
8	Hampi, Karnataka	Shrimad Rajchandra Ashram
9	Idar, Gujarat	Shrimad Rajchandra Nijabhyas and Vihar Bhavan Trust

1- Note: The list has been prepared on the basis of available information.

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NO.	TOWN, STATE	INSTITUTIONS
10	Koba, Gujarat	Shrimad Rajchandra Adhyatmik Sadhana Kendra
11	Kukma, Gujarat	Shrimad Rajchandra Sadhana Kendra
12	Parli, Maharashtra	Shrimad Rajchandra Aatma Tatva Research Centre
13	Sagodia, Gujarat	Shri Sarvamangalam Ashram
14	Sayla, Gujarat	Shree Raj Saubhag Ashram
15	Surat, Gujarat	Shrimad Rajchandra Ashram
16	Tithal, Gujarat	Raj Kahan Satsang Mandal
17	Vadva, Gujarat	Shrimad Rajchandra Nijabhyas and Vihar Bhavan Trust
18	Vavania, Gujarat	Shrimad Rajchandra Janmabhuvan
MANDIRS		
19	Ahore, Rajasthan	Shrimad Rajchandra Mandir
20	Ahmedabad, Gujarat	Shrimad Rajchandra Nijabhyas and Vihar Bhavan Trust

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NO.	TOWN, STATE	INSTITUTIONS
21	Ahmedabad, Gujarat	Shrimad Rajchandra Guru Mandir
22	Anand, Gujarat	Shrimad Rajchandra Mandir
23	Asta, Gujarat	Shrimad Rajchandra Mandir
24	Bardoli, Gujarat	Shrimad Rajchandra Mandir
25	Bengaluru, Karnataka	Shrimad Rajchandra Gyan Mandir
26	Borsad, Gujarat	Shrimad Rajchandra Mandir
27	Chennai, Tamil Nadu	Shrimad Rajchandra Gyan Mandir
28	Dantali, Gujarat	Shrimad Rajchandra Gyan Mandir
29	Hubli, Karnataka	Shrimad Rajchandra Gyan Mandir
30	Ghad Siwana, Rajasthan	Shri Raj Mandir
31	Indore, Madhya Pradesh	Shrimad Rajchandra Mandir
32	Jaipur, Rajasthan	Shrimad Rajchandra Sadhana Mandir

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NO.	TOWN, STATE	INSTITUTIONS
33	Jamnagar, Gujarat	Shrimad Rajchandra Gyan Mandir
34	Jodhpur, Rajasthan	Shrimad Rajchandra Gnan Mandir
35	Kalol, Gujarat	Shrimad Rajchandra Mandir
36	Kavitha, Gujarat	Shrimad Rajchandra Jain Mandir
37	Morbi, Gujarat	Shrimad Rajchandra Smruti Mandir
38	Morbi, Gujarat	Shrimad Rajchandra Swadhyay Mandir
39	Mumbai, Maharashtra	Shrimad Rajchandra Gnan Mandir, Ghatkopar
40	Mumbai, Maharashtra	Shrimad Rajchandra Swadhyay Hall, Chowpatti
41	Mumbai, Maharashtra	Shrimad Rajchandra Sanatan Jain Swadhyay Mandir, Malad
42	Mysore, Karnataka	Guru Mandir - Shri Sanatan Jain Mandir
43	Nadiad, Gujarat	Shri Atmasiddhishastra Rachnabhoomi
44	Nar, Gujarat	Shrimad Rajchandra Mandir

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NO.	TOWN, STATE	INSTITUTIONS
45	Naroda, Gujarat	Shrimad Rajchandra Mandir
46	Palitana, Gujarat	Giriraj Gyan Mandir
47	Rajkot, Gujarat	Shrimad Rajchandra Samadhi Bhavan
48	Rajkot, Gujarat	Shrimad Rajchandra Samadhi Mandir
49	Rajkot, Gujarat	Shrimad Rajchandra Gyanmandir
50	Rajpur, Gujarat	Shri Rajmandir Ashram
51	Ralaj, Gujarat	Shrimad Rajchandra Smarak Mandir
52	Sadodara, Gujarat	Shrimad Rajchandra Mandir
53	Simarda, Gujarat	Shrimad Rajchandra Mandir
54	Sivana, Gujarat	Shri Raj Mandir
55	Sunav, Gujarat	Shrimad Rajchandra Mandir
56	Surendranagar, Gujarat	Shri Rajmandir

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NO.	TOWN, STATE	INSTITUTIONS
57	Udaipur, Rajasthan	Shrimad Rajchandra Adhyatmik Sadhana Kendra
58	Uttarsanda, Gujarat	Shrimad Rajchandra Vankshetra
59	Vadali, Gujarat	Shrimad Rajchandra Vihar
60	Vasai, Maharashtra	Lodha Dham
61	Vataman, Gujarat	Shrimad Rajchandra Mandir
62	Vavania, Gujarat	Shrimad Rajchandra Gyan Prakash Mandir
63	Yeotmal, Maharastra	Shrimad Rajchandra Gnan Mandir
ORGANISATIONS		
64	Ahmedabad, Gujarat	Shrimad Rajchandra Subodhak Pustakalay
65	Ahmedabad, Gujarat	Shrimad Rajchandra Gyanbhandar (Division of Gujarat Vidyapeth)
66	Bardoli, Gujarat	Shrimad Rajchandra Institute of Management & Computer Application

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NO.	TOWN, STATE	INSTITUTIONS
67	Bengaluru, Karnataka	Sanatan Jain Mandal
68	Bhavnagar, Gujarat	Shrimad Rajchandra Tatvopasak Sabha
69	Idar, Gujarat	Shrimad Rajchandra Yuva Satsang Kendra
70	Khambhat, Gujarat	Shrimad Rajchandra Shri Subodhak Pathashala
71	Mumbai, Maharashtra	Shri Paramshrut Prabhavak Mandal
72	Mumbai, Maharashtra	Shrimad Rajchandra Satsang Mandal-Santacruz, Parle, Andheri
73	Mumbai, Maharashtra	Shrimad Rajchandra Adhyatmik Satsang Sadhana Kendra
74	Vaso, Gujarat	Shri Subodh Pustakalaya

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Institutions Outside India Associated with Shrimad Rajchandraji's Divine Name[1]

NO.	CITY, COUNTRY	INSTITUTIONS
	AFRICA	
1	Mombassa, Kenya	Shrimad Rajchandra Smrutigruh
	ASIA	
2	Dubai, UAE	Jain Group of Dubai
3	Hong Kong	Shrimad Rajchandra Mission Dharampur (Hong Kong)
4	Kaula Lumpur, Malaysia	Smt. Lalitaben Harsukhlal Kamdar Jain Mandir
	EUROPE	
5	Leicester, UK	Shrimad Rajchandra Gyan Mandir, Jain Samaj Europe
6	London, UK	Mahavir Foundation
7	London, UK	Shrimad Rajchandra Mission Dharampur (UK)

1- Note: The list has been prepared on the basis of available information.

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NO.	CITY, COUNTRY	INSTITUTIONS
8	London, UK	The Jain Centre - Jain Network
9	Manchester, UK	Jain Community Centre
NORTH AMERICA		
10	Chicago, IL, USA	Jain Society of Metropolitan Chicago
11	Lewis Center, OH, USA	Jain Center of Central Ohio
12	Long Island, NY, USA	Shrimad Rajchandra Mission Dharampur - Long Island Spiritual Center
13	Los Angeles, CA, USA	Jain Center of Southern California
14	Marlton, NJ, USA	Shrimad Rajchandra Mission Dharampur (USA)
15	New York, NY, USA	Jain Center of America New York

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NO.	CITY, COUNTRY	INSTITUTIONS
16	Phoenix, AZ, USA	Jain Center of Greater Phoenix
17	Somerset, NJ, USA	Shrimad Rajchandra Swadhyay Kendra of New Jersey, Jain Center of New Jersey
18	San Francisco, CA, USA	Jain Center of Northern California
19	Toronto, ON, Canada	Shrimad Rajchandra Bhakti Group of Jain Society of Toronto Inc.
20	Toronto, ON, Canada	Shrimad Rajchandra Mission Dharampur (Canada)

These centres are availed of by sincere seekers who wish to progress along the spiritual path and dedicate their lives in devotion. Drawn by Shrimad's spiritual practices as well as His writings, as the number of His devotees steadily increases, more and more places of worship and temples are being built in His memory. Mukulbhai Kalarthi aptly writes:

'More than any of these monuments, Shrimad Rajchandraji's most exemplary monument

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would be the sincere aspirants who fully absorb Shrimad's lifelong message and aspire to live it to the best of their abilities. Such aspirants, who have realised Shrimad's preaching, can themselves become sanctified temples of pilgrimage, in whose sanctum sanctorum Krupaludev forever dwells.'[1]

1- Shri Mukulbhai Kalarthi, 'Shrimad Rajchandra Jeevan-Sadhana', page 229

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(14) Epilogue

Shrimad Rajchandra – a divine soul of the highest calibre, engaged in constant pursuit of self-purification. He had attained self-realisation through unprecedented prowess of the soul. Ceaselessly augmenting the strength of the soul, He swiftly travelled on the path of liberation until the end of His life and attained a state where He had only one more birth before final emancipation.[1] He was a great knower of the Truth, a profound philosopher, dwelling in a state beyond the body though in the body, supremely benevolent, revelling in the Self,

1- 'Shrimad Rajchandra', 6th edition, pages 801-802 (Haathnondh-1, 32)

'Certainly some karmic debt
is still left to be fulfilled;
So taking one more birth,
I will forever abide in the Self.'

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forever in bliss, always non-attached, a great master, forever in favour of the Truth. No materialistic ambition of any kind touched Him. As if born only to uplift spiritual aspirants – He led an infinitely benevolent life.

In a very short span of 33 years and 5 months, Shrimad attained an incredibly elevated state. He intentionally stayed away from the public eye. He always preferred to distance Himself from exhibiting His unique capabilities, propagating His miraculous powers and the temptation of recognition. Therefore, during His lifetime, His message did not reach the masses.

Acting out of selfless compassion, He provided to the world of seekers complete spiritual guidance. Yet, the common people of that time could not recognise this Great One, and could not benefit as much as they should have from His invaluable words of wisdom. By and by, as more people learn about Shrimad and are awed by His pure, benevolent existence, they are turning towards Him and receiving endless spiritual inspiration from His life. In His short lifetime, rising beyond all kinds of prejudices, obstinacies and dogmatism, Shrimad attained great spiritual success through sincere and intense spiritual pursuit. Imparting the best nectar-like teachings as a result of His profound reflections and extensive personal experience, the life of this truly Enlightened

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Being, brimming with spiritual knowledge, is a tremendous inspiration to all sincere aspirants.

In this difficult time, Shrimad is a supreme benefactor to spiritual seekers. In His presence, worthy souls are alleviated from unbearable worldly sorrows and their oppression and attain supreme peace and eternal bliss of the Self. Akin to a wish-fulfilling tree, the greatness of Shrimad's inexplicable, unimaginable, imperceptible, inconceivable and countless virtues are limitless. Dr. Bhagwandas Mehta has written:

'Truly! By finding this gem of a person, logic received logicality, poetry became poetry, figures of speech found expression, sentiments gained beauty, the withered creeper of knowledge burst into blossom, the wish-fulfilling tree of yoga, laden with fruit, bent in humility, intelligence was freed of obstinacy, freedom manifested in the form of the Enlightened, devotion gained power, strength was personified, dharma was rejuvenated, enthusiasm was accelerated, dispassion acquired true colour, saintliness found fulfilment, governance was empowered, the authority of the kaliyug was challenged, perception resulted in perception of the Self, sensory knowledge found suitable ground, conduct manifested as right conduct, words found a connoisseur of the scriptures to testify them, experience

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found a mirror to see the reflection of its face, metaphysics was strengthened, philosophical controversies weakened, the shackles of sectarianism were severed, an unbroken path to liberation spread through the world, the storm of blind faith was blown away, the flame of right faith ignited, asadgurus were overthrown, true Sadgurus were established, the dryness of dry intellectuals withered away, mechanical ritualists were uprooted and dharma was reinstated in its true form.'[1]

The lives of inconceivable, illustrious great men can never be evaluated by words. Just as eyes are dazzled when they look into the blazing sun that helps illumine every object of the world and cannot continue gazing at it, similarly, speech becomes inadequate to extol such a Great One, who is the master of words, the incarnation of Saraswati, the One who is absorbed in the Self, illuminating one's Self and others. Words fade into silence. Therefore, any attempt to sing the glory of that unspeakable grandeur often ends with just the utterance of 'Salutations!'

1- Dr. Bhagwandas Mehta, 'Adhyatma Rajchandra', 3rd edition, page 10

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Shrimad Rajchandra Mission
Dharampur

An Introduction

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Pujya Gurudevshri Rakeshbhai

Pujya Gurudevshri Rakeshbhai, who is lovingly addressed as 'Gurudev', 'Saheb', or 'Bapa', is an embodiment of spirituality and an ardent devotee of Shrimad Rajchandraji. The founder of the Shrimad Rajchandra Mission Dharampur, Pujya Gurudevshri has illuminated numerous lives across the globe.

Born on the auspicious day of 26th September, 1966 in Mumbai, He showed signs of divinity at a very young age. Since the age of 8, He remained immersed in deep meditation and observed long periods of silence, which resulted in His attaining greater heights of spirituality. His extraordinary brilliance enabled Him to effortlessly master profound scriptures in a very short time. He was conferred with the degree of Ph.D. for His extensive research treatise on Shrimadji's finest literary creation, Shri Atmasiddhi Shastra.

In 2001, Pujya Gurudevshri's boundless compassion manifested in the form of the glorious Shrimad Rajchandra Ashram, Dharampur, where thousands of aspirants congregate to imbibe His teachings and elevate themselves. His divine benevolence has touched scores of underprivileged lives through the Shrimad Rajchandra Love and Care Programme.

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Shrimad Rajchandra Mission Dharampur

Shrimad Rajchandra Mission Dharampur is a global movement that endeavours to enhance the spiritual growth of seekers and benefit the society. The Mission Statement is -

Realise one's True Self and serve others selflessly.

Spiritual Activities

Shrimad Rajchandra Ashram at Dharampur is the International Headquarters of the Mission. It is a sanctified and vibrant Ashram spread over 223 acres of land, located on the outskirts of the town of Dharampur, on the hillock of Mohangadh.

The primary purpose of the Ashram is to help seekers advance towards their goal of self-realisation. In an endeavour to fulfil this objective, various spiritual activities such as shibirs, mahotsavs, workshops and meditation retreats are conducted at the Ashram. Pujya Gurudevshri's fortnightly pravachans and discourses on a spiritual text during the Paryushan Parva provide the impetus needed for thousands of listeners to both begin and advance on their spiritual

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quest. With the infinite compassion and guidance of Pujya Gurudevshri, the Mission is growing at a rapid pace and spreading across the globe. At present the Mission has 100 centres worldwide which play a key role in moulding and transforming thousands of lives.

Youth Activities

Pujya Gurudevshri's charming personality and vibrant spirituality has attracted multitudes of youngsters towards a life with a higher goal and meaning. In fact, with the increasing involvement of youth in the spiritual activities of the Mission, He is aptly addressed as a 'Leader of the Youth'. There are various activities organised by Pujya Gurudevshri, keeping the youth in mind. The three main areas under which Youth Activities can be classified are - Sadhana, Seva and Sanskruti. He has also inspired the formation of Youth Groups in Mumbai, in cities across India and across the globe in USA, Canada, UK, UAE, Oman, Singapore.

Children Activities

Shrimad Rajchandra Divinetouch (SRD) is a journey of inner awakening for children. SRD is an initiative aimed at inspiring and enabling children to develop internally and live a more enriching life, in line with the teachings of the Enlightened Souls. It offers

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3 programmes designed specifically for 3 different stages of development in a child's life. Magictouch-Value education for children aged 4 to 8 years, Arhat Touch - Education based on the Jain tradition for children aged 9 to 12 years, Spiritualtouch - Self-development education programme along with spiritual education through a study of the life and works of Shrimad Rajchandraji for teenagers aged 13 to 16 years.

Seva Initiatives

Shrimad Rajchandra Love and Care is an initiative to bring joy and offer service to all living beings. Included in this programme are 10 Cares related to mankind, animals and the environment. Each care has 5 key projects under it, thereby widening the reach of the service initiatives. Under Pujya Gurudevshri's able guidance, the programme is making giant strides in the direction of universal upliftment.

1. Health Care
2. Educational Care
3. Child Care
4. Woman Care
5. Tribal Care
6. Community Care
7. Humanitarian Care
8. Emergency Relief Care
9. Animal Care
10. Environmental Care

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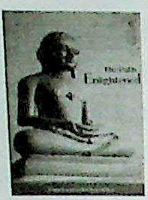
PUBLICATIONS

BOOKS AVAILABLE IN ENGLISH



- **Shrimad Rajchandra – Saga of Spirituality**
  Life of Shrimad Rajchandraji
- **Embark on the Inner Journey**
  Transformation through introspection
- **A Life Worth Living**
  Inspiring seekers to lead a meaningful life
- **Seek Thy Eternal Self**
  Inspiring the search for self-realisation
- **The Path Enlightened**
  Discovering the essence of religion
- **Bliss Within**
  Shattering the illusion of false happiness, to attain true joy
- **Time to Awaken**
  Guidance for bringing an end to transmigrations and accelerating the journey to liberation
- **Invitation to the Infinite**
  Inaugurating the Entrance into the Inner World
- **A Divine Union**
  Motivation to courageously tread the path of renunciation
- **Dhyanmulam Gurumurti**
  His Form I will Meditate
- **Pujamulam Gurupadam**
  His Lotus Feet I will Worship
- **Mantramulam Guruvakyam**
  His Word I will Follow
- **Mokshmulam Gurukrupa**
  His Grace I will Seek
- **Mrutyorma Amrutam Gamaya**
  Lead Me from Death to Eternity
- **Reflections**
  Impact of Shri Atmasiddhi Shastra on the worthy disciples
- **Impressions**
  Impact of Shri Atmasiddhi Shastra on great personalities
- **Expressions**
  The influence of Shri Atmasiddhi Shastra in proceeding towards the Supreme
- **Rajgeeta**
  English Translation with Commentary of Shri Atmasiddhi Shastra
- **Ajnabhakti**
  Daily Prayers in the Morning and Evening
- **Jinpuja**
  Understanding the importance and meaning of puja
- **Nourish Your Heart**
  Heart-warming stories for children

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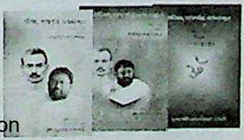
ગુજરાતીમાં પ્રાપ્ત પુસ્તકો

- **શ્રીમદ્ રાજચંદ્ર - જીવન અને કવન**
  શ્રીમદ્ રાજચંદ્રજીનું જીવન અને સાહિત્ય
- **'શ્રી આત્મસિદ્ધિ શાસ્ત્ર' વિવેચન ગ્રંથ (ભાગ ૧ થી ૪)**
  શ્રીમદ્ રાજચંદ્રજીની અમૃત કૃતિ ઉપર વિસ્તૃત ભાષ્ય
- **શ્રી આત્મસિદ્ધિ શાસ્ત્ર સંક્ષિપ્ત અર્થ**
  શ્રીમદ્ રાજચંદ્રજીની અમૃત કૃતિનું સારરૂપ અર્થઘટન
- **આરંભ કરીએ આજથી અંતર્યાત્રા**
  આત્મનિરીક્ષણ થકી રૂપાંતરણ સાધવાની પ્રેરણા
- **શુભ દેહ માનવનો મળ્યો**
  અર્થપૂર્ણ જીવન અર્થે સાધકને પ્રેરણા
- **સ્વરૂપ સંવેદન**
  આત્માનુભૂતિ તરફ આગેકૂચનો અનુબોધ
- **વીતરાગનો ધર્મ**
  પરમના પંથે પ્રોત્સાહન આપતો બોધ
- **સુખનું સરનામું**
  સુખાભાસની ભ્રાંતિ તોડી સાચા સુખની પ્રાપ્તિનો બોધ
- **અવસર આત્મકલ્યાણનો**
  ભવયાત્રાનો અંત લાવી કલ્યાણયાત્રાને વેગીલી બનાવવાનું માર્ગદર્શન
- **અંતર્મુખતાનું આમંત્રણ**
  નિજ સ્વરૂપ પ્રવેશાર્થે દ્વાર ઉદ્‌ઘાટન
- **વિરાટ સાથે વિવાહ**
  સંયમના સન્માર્ગે સાહસ પ્રેરતો બોધ
- **ધ્યાનમૂલં ગુરુમૂર્તિ**
  સદ્‌ગુરુની મંગળવર્ષિણી મુદ્રાનો મહિમા
- **પ્રવચન પુસ્તિકા**
  ૨૦૦૧ થી ૨૦૧૫ (દરેક વર્ષની ૧૨ પ્રવચન પુસ્તિકા)

  શ્રીમદ્ રાજચંદ્રજીનાં અમૃત વચનો ઉપર પૂજ્ય ગુરુદેવશ્રી દ્વારા થયેલ [illegible] પુસ્તિકા



- **પૂજામૂલં ગુરુપદં**
  સદ્‌ગુરુચરણની ઉપાસનાથી પરાભક્તિની પ્રાપ્તિ
- **મંત્રમૂલં ગુરુવાક્યં**
  સદ્‌ગુરુની આત્મકલ્યાણકારી વાણીનો મહિમા
- **મોક્ષમૂલં ગુરુકૃપા**
  ભક્તહૃદય માટે ગુરુકૃપા એ જ મોક્ષ
- **મૃત્યોર્મા અમૃતં ગમય**
  મૃત્યુના અભિશાપમાંથી અમૃતની અનુપ્રાપ્તિની ઉડાન
- **મળ્યો બોધ સુખસાજ**
  શ્રી આત્મસિદ્ધિ શાસ્ત્રનો પ્રભાવ ભક્તરત્નો ઉપર
- **સદ્‌ગુરુ બોધ સુહાય**
  શ્રી આત્મસિદ્ધિ શાસ્ત્રનો પ્રભાવ મહાનુભાવો ઉપર
- **આવ્યું અપૂર્વ ભાન**
  શ્રી આત્મસિદ્ધિ શાસ્ત્રના પ્રભાવથી અપૂર્વ પ્રતિ પ્રયાણ
- **આજ્ઞાભક્તિ**
  પ્રાતઃકાળ અને સાંયકાળનો ભક્તિક્રમ
- **જિન સ્તવના**
  જિનેશ્વર ભગવાનને સમર્પિત સ્તવનો
- **રાજ ભજના**
  શ્રીગુરુને સમર્પિત ભજનો
- **આત્મનિવેદન - અંતરમંથન**
  પ્રાર્થનાસંગ્રહ

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हिंदी में प्राप्त पुस्तकें

- **श्रीमद् राजचंद्र - जीवन और साहित्य**
  श्रीमद् राजचंद्रजी का जीवन और साहित्य
- **आरंभ करें आज से अंतर्यात्रा**
  आत्मनिरीक्षण द्वारा रूपांतरण की प्रेरणा
- **शुभ देह मानव का मिला**
  अर्थपूर्ण जीवन हेतु साधक को प्रेरणा
- **स्वरूप संवेदन**
  आत्मानुभूति की ओर अग्रसर होने हेतु अनुबोध
- **वीतराग धर्म**
  परमपुरुषों के पंथ पर प्रयाण की प्रेरणा
- **स्वयं सुखधाम**
  सुखाभास की भ्रांति को तोड़कर सच्चे सुख की प्राप्ति का बोध
- **अवसर आत्मकल्याणका**
  भवयात्रा का अंत लाकर कल्याणयात्रा को तेज़ करने का मार्गदर्शन
- **अंतर्मुखता का निमंत्रण**
  निजस्वरूप में प्रवेश हेतु द्वार उद्घाटन
- **विराट के साथ विवाह**
  सन्यास के सम्मार्ग पर प्रेरित करता हुआ बोध
- **ध्यानमूलं गुरुमूर्ति**
  सद्गुरु की मंगलवर्षिणी मुद्रा की महिमा
- **पूजामूलं गुरुपदं**
  सद्गुरु के चरणों की उपासना से पराभक्ति की प्राप्ति
- **मंत्रमूलं गुरुवाक्यं**
  श्रीगुरु के आत्मप्रभावक बोध का माहात्म्य
- **मोक्षमूलं गुरुकृपा**
  भक्तहृदय के लिये गुरुकृपा ही मोक्ष
- **मृत्योर्मा अमृतं गमय**
  मृत्यु के अभिशाप से अमृत की अनुप्राप्ति की उड़ान
- **मिला बोध सुखसाज**
  श्री आत्मसिद्धि शास्त्र का प्रभाव भक्तरत्नों पर
- **सद्गुरु बोध सुहाय**
  श्री आत्मसिद्धि शास्त्र का प्रभाव महानुभावों पर
- **हुआ अपूर्व भान**
  श्री आत्मसिद्धि शास्त्र के प्रभाव से अपूर्व की ओर प्रयाण
- **शरणागति**
  प्रार्थनासंग्रह

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BOOKS AVAILABLE IN 10 LANGUAGES

(Marathi, Bengali, Tamil, Spanish, French, German, Mandarin)

- **Shrimad Rajchandra – Saga of Spirituality**
- **Embark on the Inner Journey**
- **A Life Worth Living**

BOOKS AVAILABLE IN BRAILLE

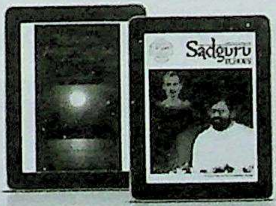
- **Embark on the Inner Journey**
  (English and Hindi)
- **A Life Worth Living**
  (English and Hindi)

MONTHLY MAGAZINES

- **Sadguru Echoes**
  (Multilingual – English, Gujarati and Hindi)
- **Divinetouch Champs** (English)
- **Divinetouch Teens** (English)

E-PUBLICATIONS

E-Publications provides online access to the digital forms of books authored by Pujya Gurudevshri, booklets of His pravachans as well as issues of 'Sadguru Echoes', the Mission's monthly magazine, enabling them to be read from anywhere in the world. In addition to the Mission website, E-Publications are also available on Amazon, Apple and other popular E-Stores.



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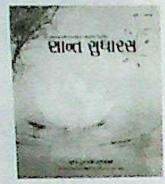
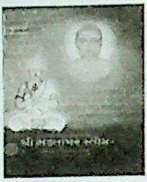
AUDIO - VIDEO

પ્રવચનો





૧. શ્રીમદ્ રાજચંદ્ર વચનામૃતજી પર પ્રવચનો

- વર્ષ ૨૦૦૧ થી ૨૦૧૫ (દરેક વર્ષનાં ૧૮ પ્રવચન)
- સર્વસમ્મત ધર્મ (પત્રાંક-૩૭)
- પરિભ્રમણનાં પ્રત્યાખ્યાન (પત્રાંક-૧૨૮)
- સમ્યગ્દર્શનનાં લક્ષણો (પત્રાંક-૧૩૫)
- મુમુક્ષુતા (પત્રાંક-૨૫૪)
- સત્સંગના યોગે અસંગપણું (પત્રાંક-૬૦૯)
- સમાધિદશાના ઉપાય (પત્રાંક-૬૫૬)
- श्रीमद् राजचंद्र वचनामृतजी के ऊपर प्रवचन (हिंदी)

૨. અન્ય ધર્મગ્રંથો પર પ્રવચન

- શ્રી ઉત્તરાધ્યયન સૂત્ર
- શ્રી ભક્તામર સ્તોત્ર
- યોગદષ્ટિસમુચ્ચય
- ગણધરવાદ
- શાન્ત સુધારસ
- જ્ઞાનસાર
- શ્રી આનંદઘન ચોવીસી
- શ્રીમદ્ દેવચંદ્રજીકૃત ચોવીસી
- યોગસાર
- સમાધિતંત્ર
- અનુભવપ્રકાશ
- ઇષ્ટોપદેશ
- આત્માનુશાસન
- તત્ત્વજ્ઞાન તરંગિણી
- સમ્યગ્જ્ઞાનદીપિકા
- સામ્યશતક
- હૃદયપ્રદીપ
- શ્રી નવપદ મહિમા
- શ્રીમદ્ ભગવદ્ગીતા
- અષ્ટાવક્ર ગીતા
- નારદ ભક્તિ સૂત્ર
- ગંગાસતી એમ બોલિયાં રે

3. PRAVACHANS ON OTHER SUBJECTS

- Dealing with Anger Effectively
- Strengthening the Meditative Muscle
- Introspection
- The Happiness Sensex
- Sadguru Serving Desserts

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સ્વાધ્યાયકારો દ્વારા શિબિર

- શ્રી આત્મસિદ્ધિ શાસ્ત્ર
- છ પદનો પત્ર
- અપૂર્વ અવસર
- હે પ્રભુ! હે પ્રભુ! શું કહું
- ક્ષમાપના
- દેવવંદન

ભજનો

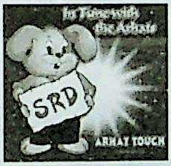
ગુજરાતી

- આજ્ઞાભક્તિ - બીજમ્
- આજ્ઞાભક્તિ - અંકુરમ્
- આજ્ઞાભક્તિ - પર્ણમ્
- ઓવારણાં
- કૃપાનિધાન
- નૈવેદ્યમ્
- પ્રભુતા
- નમામિ રાજચંદ્રમ્
- વંદે જિનેન્દ્રમ્
- પરમના પંથે

हिंदी

- मेरे गुरुदेव
- मेरे सितारे
- मेरे राज
- निजानंद
- बैरागी
- नैवेद्यम्
- प्रभुता
- धम्मो मंगलं

DIVINE MELODIES FOR CHILDREN



- **In Tune with the Divine**
  (English and Hindi)
- **In Tune with the Arhats**
  (English, Gujarati and Hindi)
- **In Tune with Myself**
  (English and Hindi)

MEDITATION

(English and Gujarati)

- **Sakshi**
- **Sadgurum Tam Namami**
  Melting in Meditation

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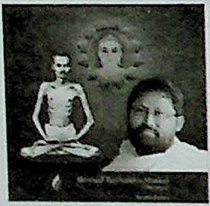
પ્રાર્થનાઓ

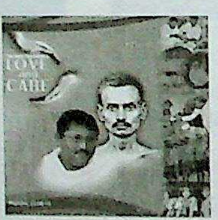
- હે દેવ
- હે નાથ
- હે કૃપાળુ

આધ્યાત્મિક નાટકો

- મહાસતી શ્રીચંદનબાળા
- નળ-દમયંતી
- જિનશાસન જયવંત વર્તો
- આપનો અંબાલાલ
- ભરતેશ્વર-બાહુબલી

INTRODUCTORY VIDEOS





- **Shrimad Rajchandra Mission Dharampur**
  (English and Gujarati)

- **Shrimad Rajchandra Love and Care**
  (English)

- **Shrimad Rajchandra Divinetouch**
  (English)

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SADGURU ENLIGHTENS

Telecast of Pravachans on TV Channels

TV CHANNELS:

Tune out the noise of the world and tune into Pujya Gurudevshri's blissful pravachans on television every day. Drench in the wisdom of the Guru, as Pujya Gurudevshri's pravachans are telecast regularly on channels like Aastha, Sanskar, Arihant, Soham, GS TV, In Cable (Vadodara), GTPL News (Valsad), Citi Cable (Dharampur), TV Asia (USA).

For more details regarding the Pravachan Timings on Television Channels, please visit: **http://www.shrimadrajchandramission.org/sadguru-enlightens**

आस्था संस्कार अरिहंत सोहम GSTV IN CABLE VADODARA - 1 GTPL NEWS VALSAD Citi CABLE TV ASIA

You may also view pravachans at: **http://www.youtube.com/srmissiondharampur**

WEBCAST:

Various spiritual programmes like satsang shibirs, mahotsavs, fortnightly pravachans, paryushan pravachanmalas and special occasions are webcast free of cost throughout the world, enabling devotees to transcend geographical barriers and stay connected. **www.shrimadrajchandramission.org/webcast**

SOCIAL MEDIA:

You may follow Pujya Gurudevshri online on Speaking Tree at **www.speakingtree.in** and be updated about the latest events, photo albums and much more of the Mission on Facebook at: **www.facebook.com/shrimadrajchandramission**

THE SPEAKING TREE

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SADGURU WHISPERS

SMS from Pujya Gurudevshri

Fuelling the aspirant's spiritual pursuit and keeping him connected to the Divine amidst his worldly life, is the Soul Mesmerising Service - enriching messages from Pujya Gurudevshri, sent via SMS, every morning. For more details, please visit:
http://www.shrimadrajchandramission.org/sadguru-whispers

SADGURU APPS

Mobile Apps to keep you connected

Self Connect:

A multipurpose mobile application embedded with a sadhana organiser, mood tracker, task manager, hourly connect and diary to help you keep up with your spiritual disciplines, seva assignments, task commitments and connect to the Divine. The App is available for Android and iOS devices.

http://www.shrimadrajchandramission.org/self-connect

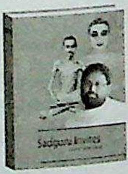
Sadguru Enlightens:

This mobile application facilitates the viewing and downloading of Pujya Gurudevshri's enlivening pravachans and elevating events anywhere in the world. It is ideal for those who are constantly on the move enabling them to receive spiritual nourishment no matter where they are. This aesthetically designed and user friendly app is available for Android as well as iOS devices.

http://www.shrimadrajchandramission.org/sadguru-enlightens-app

SADGURU INVITES

A Kit for Beginners



Are you taking your first steps towards the Divine? Inspired by Pujya Gurudevshri, this kit of publications and audio - video recordings is designed especially to introduce seekers to the essence of spirituality. Embark on your journey into the world within. It is available in English, Gujarati and Hindi.

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Administrative Office
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Plot No. 13, Mathew Road,
Opera House, Mumbai - 400004.
India. +91 22 40023377

Website: **www.shrimadrajchandramission.org**
Email: **divineshop@shrimadrajchandramission.org**

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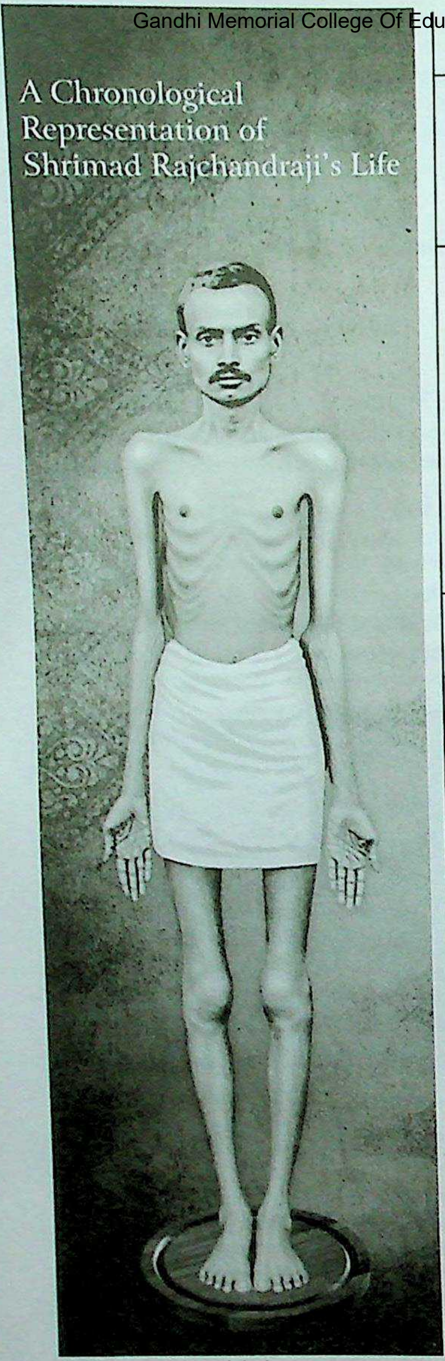

A.D. - Events

1867
- Born on 9th November, on the auspicious day of Kartik Purnima, V.S. 1924, at Vavania.

1875
- Attained jatismarajnan (recollection of past lives) on witnessing a burning pyre, at the age of 7 years.
- Started formal education at school, where He showed extraordinary grasping power and memory.

1881
- Studied various scriptures and treatises on dispassion, philosophy.

1884
- Authored Mokshmala, a text expounding the profound principles of Jainism, in only three days, at the age of 16 years and 5 months.

1886
- Composed Bhavnabodh, a small booklet inspiring the seeker to cultivate twelve specific sentiments leading to detachment from the material world.

1887
- Performed the staggering feat of shatavdhan, (being attentive to a hundred objects and activities at one time) at Mumbai.

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1888

- Tied the nuptial knot with Jhabakben on Maha Sud 12, V.S. 1944, at Morbi.
- Shri Juthabhai's first meeting with Shrimadji.

1889

- Commenced jewellery business in partnership with Shri Revashankarbhai, in Mumbai.

1890

- Shri Ambalalbhai, Shri Saubhagyabhai and Shri Lalluji Muni met Him for the first time.
- Shri Juthabhai passed away.
- Divine experience of shuddh samyak darshan (right self-perception) in V.S. 1947.

1891

- First meeting with Mahatma Gandhi.

1896

- Spiritual retreats at Kavitha, Ralaj, Vadva, Khambhat and Anand.
- On Aso Vad Ekam, V.S. 1952, composed His magnum opus – 'Shri Atmasiddhi Shastra', embodying the quintessence of all the scriptures, in one sitting of about 1½ to 2 hours, at Nadiad.
- Wrote His famous poetic composition, 'Apurva Avsar' expressing His desire for total renunciation.

1897

- Shri Saubhagyabhai left his mortal body.

1898

- Intense spiritual practices in the forests of Kavitha, Vaso, Uttarsanda, Kheda.

1899

- In solitude in Idar.

1900

- Severe deterioration in health.
- Visited Dharampur, Ahmedabad, Viramgam, Vavania, Morbi and Wadhwan Camp.

1901

- Left His mortal body on Chaitra Vad Pancham, V.S. 1957 (9th April, 1901), at the young age of 33 years and 5 months, in Rajkot, in a state of awareness and equanimity.

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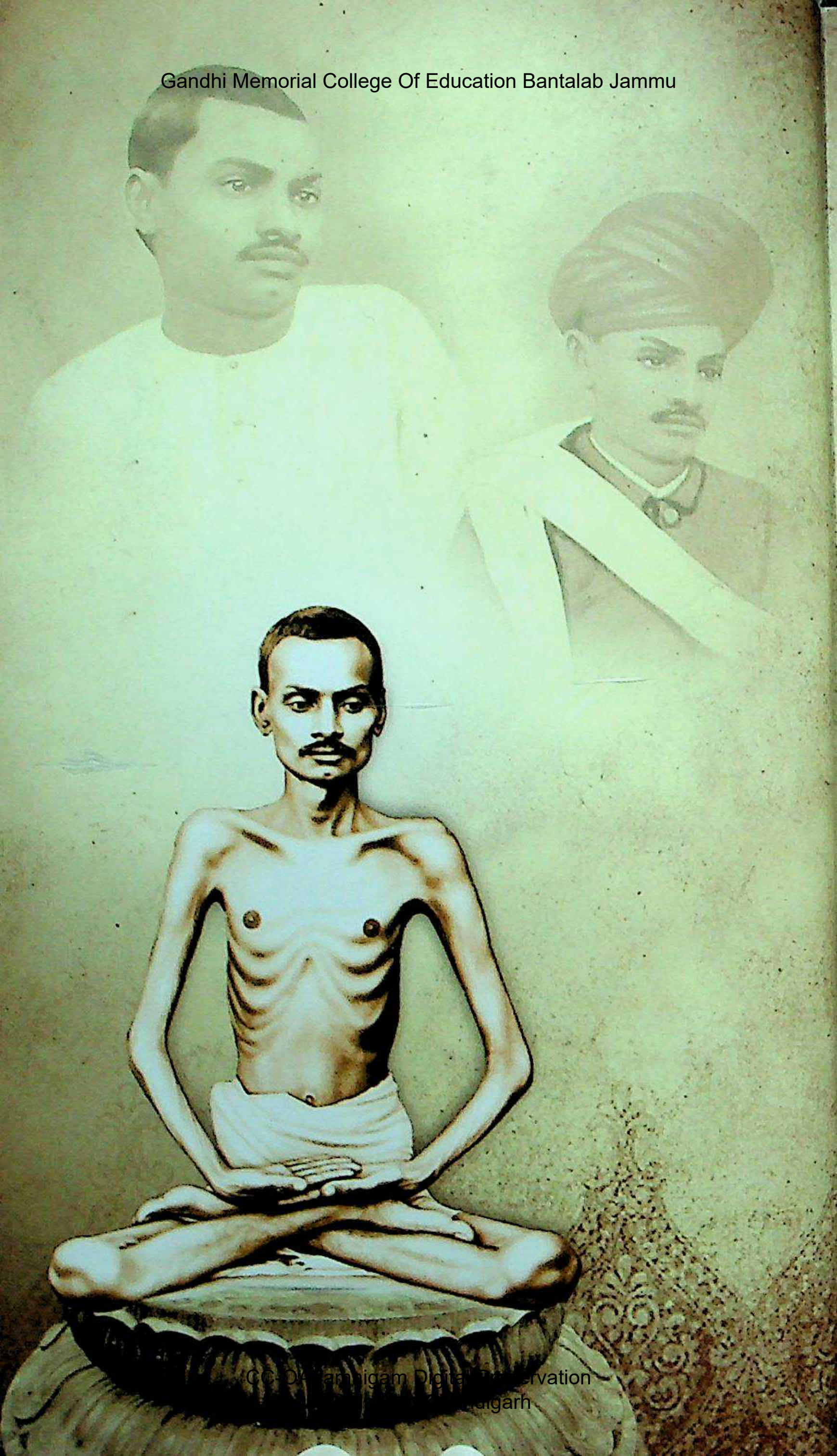

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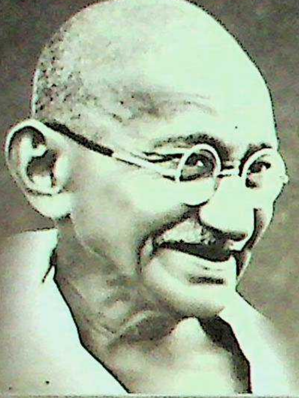

'This man has won my heart in spiritual matters, and no one else has ever made on me the same impression. I have said elsewhere that besides Kavi (Shrimadji), Ruskin and Tolstoy have contributed in forming my intrinsic character, but Kavi has had a more profound effect because I had come in personal and intimate contact with Him.'

-Mahatma Gandhi, 'Modern Review', June 1930

On one hand, the manifestation of intense worldly entanglements;
On the other, bliss and serenity arising from inner wisdom.

On one hand, outwardly engaging in business and social activities;
On the other, abiding in the Self.

On one hand, a life of ceaseless and fervent pursuit of spirituality;
On the other, compassionately composed works for spiritual upliftment.

An introduction to the extrinsic and
intrinsic life of an Extraordinary Being who attained Self-Realisation
is

Shrimad Rajchandra – Saga of Spirituality

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